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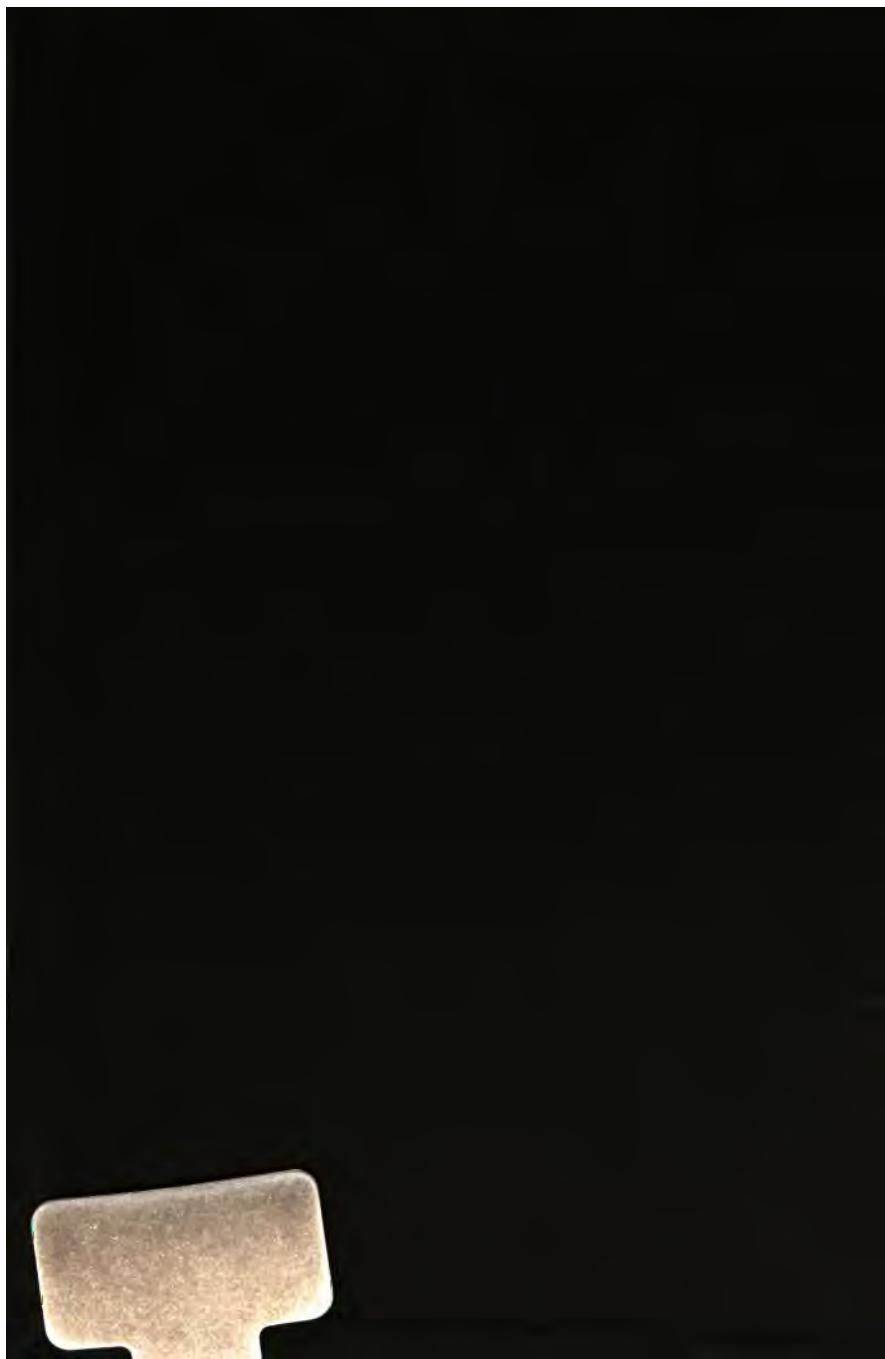
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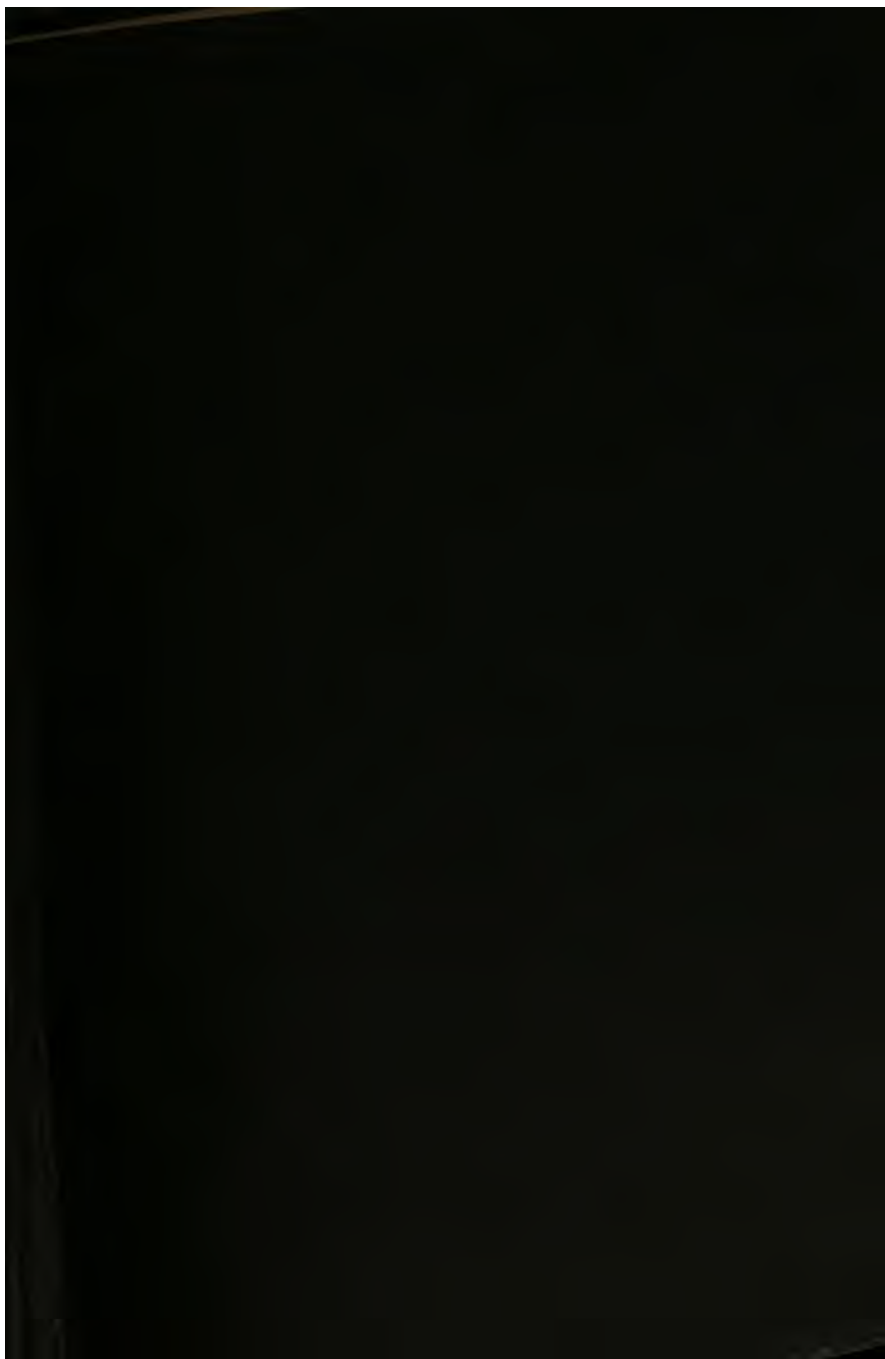
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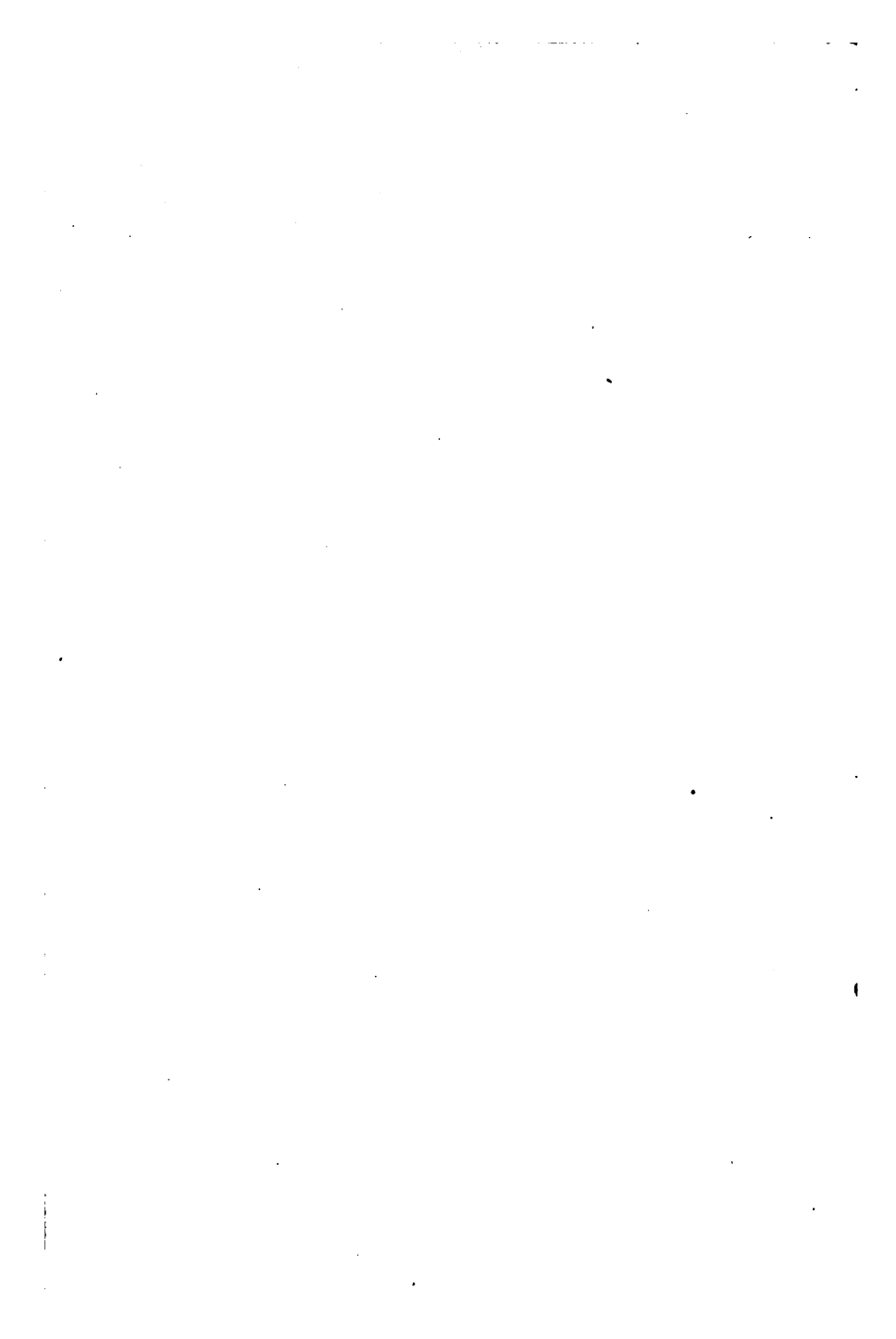
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LETTERS FROM BOMBAY.

BY

D. AUBREY.

LONDON:
REMINGTON & CO., PUBLISHERS,
HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

1884.

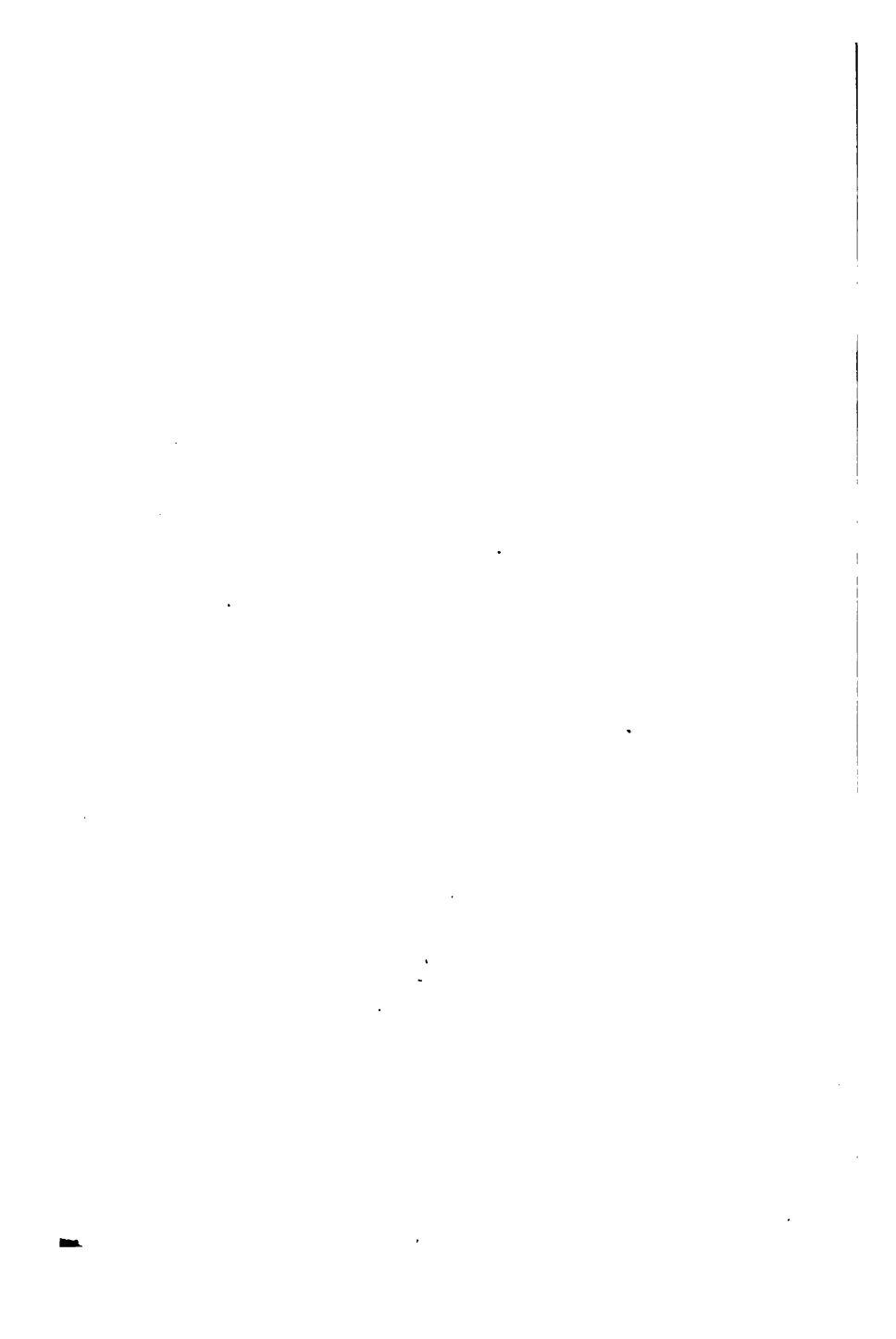
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NOTE.

THIS little book comprises twenty-six letters written from Bombay to friends in England during the month of June, 1883. It makes no pretension to originality, to graphic description, or to elegance of style. If, from its pages the reader is able to gather a few facts about the most populous of our Anglo-Indian Presidency towns, the chief end and object of its publication will have been achieved. To avoid tediousness the names of the persons corresponded with have been omitted, and all mere personal matters have, it is hoped, been excised. By means of a slight transposition of date and place identification of the individuals referred to in the narrative has been rendered impossible.

LETTERS FROM BOMBAY.

LETTER I.

ON THE RAIL.

FRIDAY, 1ST JUNE, 1883.

NEAR AHMEDABAD.

LANGUAGE is powerless to give you an idea of the miseries experienced by the railway traveller in India at this season of the year. The dust, the stifling heat, the occasional entry of frouzy-smelling natives into the carriage compose together an iliad of woes which makes a journey down-country an event to be long remembered with groans. The torments of hell, even as described by Dante himself, seem clement when compared to those we endure.

A bell rings, and off the train starts raising a dense cloud of dust which enfolds it like a pall throughout its circuit. The lattice blind, the

three different sets of white and coloured window glasses provided for each passenger carriage fail to keep out the obnoxious particles which soon cover one as with flour, and give a leprous appearance to every object. Black clothes are shortly transformed into grey raiment, the lips, eyelashes, and beard thickly powdered, and the traveller who entered the carriage a youth often finds himself after a few hours with the silver hair of old age. Nostrils and ears become closed, breathing itself difficult, and all remaining energy is directed to seeking some alleviation for these discomforts by a copious libation. But alas! like other provisions wine is impregnated with dust, and the daintiest tipple smacks but of the earth of which we are moulded. Meanwhile do what one will the glare streams into the carriage, warming up cushions, bolsters, doors, everything to a torrid heat. Roasted and parched one turns, yawns, and stretches one's self, unutterably miserable, in the half-darkened compartment. The unread novel drops from the hand, and the uncut pages of the magazine curl up in the heat.

Now and then the train comes to a halt at a station, and native water carriers pass up and down its whole length carrying brass vessels full of "pani," otherwise water. Scores of black heads are thrust out of the windows to procure the refreshing, if somewhat insipid beverage, and a quick interchange of the liquid takes place between the water purveyors and the wretchedly feeble and dirty native travellers. Here one will

see a Mahommedan holding out a bright copper kettle to get it replenished with Adam's ill-filtered ale, further on a Hindoo thrusts out a stone pot suspended to his girdle by chains, and quite in the distance a woman throws back her head whilst the company's Ganymedes pours down her upturned mouth the refreshing fluid which she so noisily gargles. The craving of thirst once allayed, sweetmeats and gingerbreads are hawked up and down the platform, oranges, too, occasionally mangoes, and well-fingered figs. The Britisher is, however, proof against these foreign delicacies, and he usually retires for more substantial entertainment to the refreshment room almost exclusively provided for him.

The monotony of my journey is occasionally, however, relieved by occurrences reminding me very forcibly I am travelling through Moslem districts. With a tremendous *éclat* a palanquin will now and again come rushing along the platform, borne by dark bearers and accompanied by a retinue of staid duennas, the guardians of Argus-eyed Asiatic jealousy. The oscillating and silver-plated litter, hermetically closed, is brought quite close to a carriage door marked "Reserved," and then a red screen is adjusted over the palkee and over the door to enable the Zenana lady to pop from her couch into the carriage. The operation is at length successfully performed, the beauty has taken her seat without being seen, and after some clamour her female attendants follow her.

Meanwhile the bearers, relieved of their charge, go away singing verses excessively complimentary to their late burden, but which, when well out of hearing, they will probably change for impromptu couplets on her physical and moral characteristics, and those of her female relatives scarcely so eulogistical. Meanwhile the wrinkled and sour-visaged governess of the harem takes up her station at the only open window, and, notwithstanding my many efforts, I fail to catch a glimpse of the *péri* within. The railway officials, in answer to my enquiries, barely condescend to inform me that the concubine of the Rajah of Mourah is now just setting out on a visit to the Hills, and I find it difficult to elicit that the Thakur of Kaj's first favourite is but just returning from a tour to a village which her paramour recently gave her to enjoy in joint tenancy with a dancing girl, a Gosannee or religious Hindoo mendicant, and a beautiful boy bought for a cupful of wine. The well-guarded carriage is as full of chatter as a nest of perky magpies or loquacious minas.

Heterogeneous are the masses of baggage now borne across the platform to the luggage van. Persian carpets of rare workmanship follow hard on coarse bales of cloth, gaudy rugs, Cashmere shawls and veils "light as sighs." Wooden chests embossed with brass-headed nails, daubed with vivid flowers, are piled up with carpet bags of capacious size, ornamented with floss silks like a delicate lady's reticule. Brilliant timepieces,

playing tunes every hour, musical boxes, mechanical toys, a doll with large blue eyes of Brummagem ware contrast strangely with the hideous and antiquated clay representations of the animal world turned out by the Hindoo workshop. Boxes too full to shut down disclose stores of beads, spangles, and tinsel stars only fit for an African savage, and through the crushed lid of a milliner's bandbox I catch glimpses of satin vests, silken scarves, and flowered pyjamas. Mirrors, brass pannikins, chibouks, unguents, embroideries, promiscuously defile before me. The air is redolent with the odour of sandalwood and attar of roses, and the nostrils are saluted with the fragrance of perfumed opium cigarettes. Such is the modern Moslem hetaira's personal luggage. A native steward, who looks as wan as an eunuch, ticks off each item on a grooved stick as it disappears into the van.

But the secluded lady's carriage bears no comparison as regards babblement to the car especially reserved for the low-class native female, for, as I dare say you know, the male and the fair sex in India usually travel apart. These native carriages are dirty third and fourth classes, railed in with bars like a cage, and within the enclosure one beholds a scene forcibly conjuring up the Black Hole of Calcutta. Women and babes are all huddled together, looking terribly warm, poor things, their multi-coloured mantles or vests fallen from their shoulders and backs, the

perspiration streaming down the face and running over the arms, their bracelets quite dimmed, every muscle strung to tension, every vein swelling with thirst, but their loquacity as yet unabated. They scream, shout, moan, cry out, plead for "sweet" water, sop it up in the palms of their hands, press it to lip, eyebrow, and nostril, gargle it with iron lungs, and cling on to the bowl with all the tenacity of a man grasping a plank after shipwreck. As the liquid revives them they begin to look to their toilet, the dishevelled hair is wound up in a knot at the back of the head, the clothing modestly drawn over naked bosom and sombre thigh, and perhaps they even deign to throw a rag over the nude infants they suckle or soothe to sleep on their laps. Here a mother will be seen lending her assistance to adjust her daughter's nose ring; quite opposite a lass is taking a foot bath and cleaning her feet in a sheepskin, whilst quite in a corner a corpulent lady is undergoing a process which reminds me of a racehorse being groomed down. A feminine surgeon-barber intent on turning an honest anna or two, after trimming the toenails of a somnolent wench, is now cleaning out wax from the ears of an elderly dame, who undergoes an operation relished by all Orientals as a luxury, with smiles beatific. Imagine a cage full of garrulous women, semi-nude, protruding their heads and their arms between iron bars, or engaged in the occupations I have described—one steaming crowd redolent of

unsavoury odours—and you will have a faint idea of the railway carriage appropriated to the poor class of native females. Woe to the incautious male who is caught spying these fair ones; female modesty, shocked at being detected in *dishabille*, pursues him with curses right up to his carriage.

And what a contrast to all this hubbub and noise are the two taciturn Mahommedan gentlemen with whom I travel for most of the way. Both are attached to the Court of the Gaëkwar, and are now journeying to pay their salaams and offer a nuzzur to their suzerain Prince at Baroda. They eat but once during the journey, as the sun sinks below the arid and sterile plain, dotted with palms and cactus bushes, we are traversing. As a courteous return for the loan of my knife they hand me biscuits, execrably sweet balls of sugar and ghee, and politely offer me a deliciously juicy mango cut into slices. I partake of their hospitality, to which I can unhappily make no return, for they look inexpressibly shocked when I take wine, and I feel that my Christian food would ill suit their infidel digestions. A map of India, brightly coloured, slightly relaxes the muscles of the least saturnine voyager, but I fail to make him understand the principle on which it is framed. He holds the atlas upside down, puckers his forehead, and munches and chews meditatively over it. My railway time book is also a conundrum to him, and its study evidently excites thirst, for plenteous draughts of cool water from a silver

teapot follow on its intricate perusal. With curiosity he watches the ever-rising mercury bubbling up in my thermometer.

As night creeps on these fellow-travellers unwind their turbans, wrap the muslin head-gear in silk handkerchiefs, deposit aigrette and brooch in wooden chests, unstrap the leathern couches and prepare to turn into bed. For the first time I understand the intricacies of Oriental costume, the involutions of the tunic, and the very flimsy garments it covers. Sandals are tossed off the feet, cummer-bands, or waist-bands, converted into sleeping sheets, and the two Moslems are soon cosily snoring, wearing small close-fitting silk caps, their jewelled and truculent scimitars lying by their sides. Even the noise made by a barber who comes at midnight into the carriage to shave me, when the train stops at Ahmedabad, fails to awake them. Nor do they evince the slightest sign of restlessness when a marvellously sharp boy comes to sell me a pretty earthen "chattie," or jar, and brings me his sister to receive baksheesh, as well as to give me refreshment. The dark girl is so pretty, so soft-looking and yet so vivacious, that I must own I rather enjoy the draught I take from her bright vessel of brass, and am, perhaps, unnecessarily long in imbibing the insipid potation. She has really some rare jewelry on the well-rounded arms, around the delicate throat, that would have suited the chisel of an Eastern Canova, and I offer a rupee for the

silver bangle with glittering bells she wears on her dusky but tiny feet. The boy in a moment strips her of her childish gewgaw; she cries, looks prettier still, and drawn by her beauty, as moths by the flame, I restore the treasure with a rupee, which sets the couple leaping with joy on the platform. I finally leave them hugging and kissing the money, and making gestures which vividly express that they will at length be enabled to have a good meal. It may seem strange to you that this poor coolie girl should wear ivory and silver bracelets as well as earrings of gold. But then you must remember that throughout India the peasant still continues to invest his savings on jewels, nose-rings and toe-rings he hangs on his wives and his children, and disposes of or pledges as occasion requires. The passion for ornament is universal with the Hindoo, the Mussulman, and the Parsee. The acquisition of precious gems is often their only extravagance.

I cannot say the stations we stop at greatly differ from those which we see at home. Advertising is still in its infancy, and instead of porters the coolie in tunic and turban indolently moves about with the luggage. Railway cabs are replaced by the bullock cart, the tonga, the gharri, rarely by the palkee. The passengers are chiefly Orientals of every conceivable race and creed, and now and anon a dirty fakir, painted with ashes, hideously daubed with streaks of ochre between each starting rib, an unparalleled incarnation of

leanness, dust, and viscous matter, leers unkindly at his white-faced antagonist. An ayah or two may be seen rapidly waddling to the refreshment room to supply the Anglo-Indian lady's very numerous requirements. John Bull in pyjamas and sleeping attire swaggers about his compartment fanning himself and drinking iced pegs from the plentiful store of bottles in the netting over his head. If a quick, sharp crackling noise is heard one may make pretty sure 'tis a native breaking a sugar cane over his knee to extract the saccharine juice. Swarms of scared native women in bright-coloured garments pass up and down seeking to find a vacant seat. Banias, pedlars, and borahs are still washing their feet and cleansing their dust-laden knees around the fountain hard by the frames which support the earthen pots where the drinking water is stored. Under the platform verandah coolies bandaged up in sheets, like mummies, peacefully snore. That the rail has done much to break up caste and race isolation is at once evident from the sight of the many Chandalas sweepers and poor Brahmins who are now journeying in the company of voluble Eurasians and reticent Sikhs in third-class carriages. The active Parsee perambulates with refreshing tea, which most European travellers hanker after wherever they go. English officers returning from a "shikar," or sporting tour, render night hideous with the bay and yelp of the hounds they tug at their heels. At length these

animal pets and the hunting horses are safely disposed of in the cattle vans, and the spoils of the chase, in the shape of tiger skins and innumerable antlers and horns, are safely stored away with gun cases and unsightly masses of bedding. The helmeted and white jacketed guard sounds his shrill whistle and off we go for another uninterrupted and dusty spin of some twenty miles.

But not before I have caught a glimpse of the Rajah of Mowrah; not before I have seen his Nawab, his gold stick, his crapulous suite. Seated on the leathern cushions of a first-class carriage, looking as insincere and sly as if on the gaddi, this sybaritical potentate smokes his odorous hubble-bubble as he reclines on his kin-cob pillow, with the right arm tenderly thrown around the waist of a boy he has adopted from a fishing village. For this youth he has divested himself of his bracelets, his earrings, his jewels, the pearl that ornamented his turban, the carbuncle that glittered on the neck of soft-lidded slaves kidnapped from Cashmere. Adorned in primrose-coloured silk, damask and garish brocade, the poor youth swelters under the weight of his emerald corslet, and puts up a languid hand now and again to steady the masses of hair inter-twisted with gems and bandlets of ribbon he wears on the head. The obsequious barons or feudatory thakurs seated around are as abject and measly-mouthed as the European buffoon, and two squalid Hindoos wearing necklets of dull gold, their fore-

heads painted with saffron, mount guard over the dusty insignia of royalty; the peacock fan, the yak tail, the silken umbrella.

Thus travels the Prince, as incapable henceforth of spreading dismay in rural districts by the extortions of his ministers as of amercing venerable headmen and village patels for the equipment of his predatory guard, and impuissant for the future to rob the merchant or imprison the goldsmith to obtain the wherewithal to keep up his elephant stables, his hummums, or his pleasure houses with their blinds of red satin and their domes of white marble inscribed with choice lines from Arabic poets. But although the British resident has left him but a nominal rule, so conservative is Asiatic feeling, that his wan and sallow face, his bloodshot eyes encircled with black, his lowering brow, damp with the moisture of premature decay, still strike terror at the durbar, and his filigree babooches are still as assiduously kissed by his timid vassals as if he still held the uncontrolled sway of the autocrat.

Yet he is more effeminate in appearance than certain ancestors of his house who, when vanquished in battle, were formerly compelled to adopt women's raiment, to sport anklet and noselet, to toil at the spindle, to grind at the mill, to submit to the castrating knife of the surgeon, and who were nightly brought forth arrayed in silk kirtles and gossamer veils amidst captive kings and dethroned queens, to scramble with the noseless,

sightless, and crippled next heirs to the crown for the crumbs that fell from an insolent but virile conqueror's table. With his left hand he feeds himself with pulpy mangoes and juicy grapes from the pyramid of fruit laid out before him, and swallows them with a gluttony that would have done credit to a guest at Trimalcion's banquet. For this mortal, dissolute as an Assyrian satrap, a guard of honour will be in waiting at the terminus, and if the salute of nineteen guns he is entitled to be not fired as he enters Bombay, a correspondence will ensue with the military authorities probably lasting a decade. The most exalted Order of the Indian Empire has recently been conferred upon him to smooth down official asperities. But enough of this interminable digression.

Everyone who can afford it travels with a pillow which varies in size. The English lady's is usually bulky, the Mahomedan's is often as slim as a long roll of French bread, whilst others are gaudily covered with stuff resembling Shikarpur chintz.

After washing my hands and performing my ablutions in the lavatory which forms a part of the compartment, I shall sink on my couch and endeavour to sleep. I shall probably do so, for I am now thoroughly tired, and I dare say the lazy cry of the coolie calling out the names of the stations will no more awake me than the buzz of the mosquitoes around the dim lamp. But how

I long to see the white board with the word Bombay in English, Hindi, and Gujerathi painted upon it, which will assure me I have at length reached my destination. Oh! the inexpressible torture of Indian railway travelling at this time of the year. But no more to-night, dear friend. Let me now close these humble and unromantic incidents of a down-country journey.

LETTER II.

AN HISTORICAL RETROSPECT.

SATURDAY, 2ND JUNE, 1883.

BOMBAY.

MY last night's predictions that I should shortly fall asleep were realized. A moment or two after ceasing to write to you, my eyes closed on my miseries. My dreams naturally took both their colour and character from the many books I have lately been reading about the great city I was so fast speeding to.

Primæval Bombay, as in a panorama, rose before my mental vision. My slumbering mind reverted to an era when no temple, mosque, or hut, was as yet built on the melancholy strand, and the jungle was still untracked by the footsteps of man. A thousand palms fringed a sea-shore, desolate, rocky, resonant with the boom of rolling surf, and open to the encroachments of every storm. Under

tangled and matted vegetation, myriads of stagnant pools, and malarious quagmires evaporated when touched by the occasional shafts of the sun piercing the veil of dripping foliage. Prairies of samphire bounded the estuaries, dividing the as yet unnamed islands of Salsette, Bombay, and Colaba, and at every conflux of the tide the sea, like a maelstrom gyrated over nullah and sandhill, and eddied around falling timber, as it flew past waving meadows of lotus. Sedgy banks, riverine flags, marine flowrets grew over morasses inhospitable as the Arabian desert, and sparsely interplanted with thickets, rank grass, and copses of paludean tamarinds. Hills of sand, upcast by the cyclone, like the petrified rollers of some blonde ocean, and still ruffled with the wavy marks of the hot breath of the breeze, were gathered around boulders black as those of Sodom and Gomorrah, or Mount Hecla. Disintegrated by the combined cataclysm falling from the heavens, and the disrupting waters of the earth, the soil fell to grit, and floating and verdurous foliage swam out upon an ocean as yet untraversed by the deeply-laden canacks of Portugal. Vast areas of rock, sandhills, and strange vegetation, peeping above the unmeasured depths, bore witness to a vanishing Atlantis. Under a brazen sky, in a blue sea, a miniature and circumjacent Archipelago blistered with heat, irradiant with white salt, stood out in relief against the distant barrier of the Western Ghauts. Strange scenery ; this tropical and in-

sular fen combined the luxuriant foliage and stir of the Cinghalese forest with the sterility and silence of the saline plains of the Runn of Cutch.

Distressed elephants entrapped into the soft soil, in vain clutched at huge banyan trees—coeval with the Deluge—to uplift themselves from a closing grave, fiercely trumpeting with raised proboscis the while. The tiger wandered over the rocky flanks of Malabar Hill, and troops of antelope, suddenly drawing up on their haunches by the side of a gushing lagoon, scented the breeze for the smell of cheetah or leopard. Swinging from branch to branch, monkeys threw down flowers and cocoa-nuts on the labyrinth of rapid waters, or forded brook or streamlet on bridges of creepers, upheld by the fibres of parasitical plants. Under numberless grottos of jungle-grass, or arcades of palmyra acacias and date trees, parrots, kingfishers, and crows, chattered and rustled; the whip-snake glided over gnarled trunks left bare by the falling earth, squirrels swung from the multiplying boughs overladen with pensile nests. Trees of all shapes, laden with fruit and inextricably intertwined and matted, grew to giddy heights, whilst here and there, undermined and rotten, a giant of the forest, overset by the velocity of the flood, went helplessly crashing to and fro, bearing in his train a goodly wealth of floral treasure. Graceful birds, arrayed in all the brilliancy of tropical plumage, darted under their native brushwood; jackals, hunting in packs, made

a dismal and incessant howl; a male elk, followed by twenty-two does, started affrighted at the sound of the amphibæna. Unwieldy and slow, the turtle crawled ashore to lay her eggs; boars and hogs, scuttled hither and thither, and herds of buffaloes scurried inland. From the sterile sand-hills, vibrating columns of dust, hot as a furnace's ashes, arose at the puff of the breeze, and around the rocks scorpions and centipedes hunted the lizard. Flamingoes stood watching the mazes of the inland navigation; ducks and waterfowl circumnavigated the long spits of sand, and oceanwards on extended pinions flew the seabirds.

But shortly after the advent of the sixteenth century the virgin savannah resounded with the axe of the Portuguese, and the grating noise of the saw was heard amidst the pillared colonnades of luxuriant trees. A few pitiable hutches arose on the insular shores, a few Troglodyte savages peeped from the caves, and man struggled for life with the beast. Before the squalid hovels, shaded by cocoa-nut trees, the hidalgo in conical crowned hat of taffeta and inflexible ruff, carried on his peddling commerce.

In the year 1665 an English galleon crossed the Indian seas, a naval captain paced on the strand, the National flag was unfurled, and to the sound of culverin and demi-cannon he took possession of the Isle of Bombay in the name of his Sovereign as part of the dowry of the Infanta Catherine, the Royal Consort. Subsequently transferred to the

East India Company for an annual rent of ten pounds in gold, that mercantile body strengthened and enlarged the castle and fort of their settlement of rock, jungle and swamp, encouraged native manufactures of cotton and silk, and the lagoon made way for a harbour. With more than Dutch industry embankments were thrown up to beat back the towering waves of the south-west monsoon, submarine rocks were mined to afford safe anchorage, and fishing stakes marked out the course of navigation around the shallows to the gallivat, prow, hoy, and ketch. A small colony rose on the lone shore which became a veritable city of refuge to the native from neighbouring despots, and a hiding place for Western adventurers. Unhealthy settlement! perfect charnel-house for the English of two centuries ago, few men lived to see two monsoons, few infants existed beyond their suckling days. Few were the white women who dared run the risk of so malarious a spot that they might cheer their husbands during the perennial attacks of fluxes, dropsy, and malignant fevers which afflicted these first pioneers of civilization. Now and again a matron in fardingale, patched and beperiwigged, might be seen looking out on her fields where buffaloes or cows grazed, or a lass in hoop and stiff stomacher directed her Hindoo maids to wash the oyster shells that did duty for window panes in the lonely hovel of yellow bamboo. But these were probably concubines

recently sent out by a Company ever zealous to prevent intermarriage, or sexual intercourse between its Factors and the native female "lest the colony should be weakened thereby." A Nair woman, with her half-dozen husbands, was not more zealously courted than these few fair ones who were captured and recaptured as if they had been beauties of Kandy. But too often the European cohabited with a host of Aryan paramours, plunged in the lowest debauchery, finding no solace for his expatriation but in country arrack or punch; and yet almost forgetful of the Lares and Penates of an English home from which he heard but once in two years. In that bibulous world the Angel of Death found no repose; but no sooner had his sickle mowed down piratical captains, unscrupulous traders, or robber gangs than the mother country sent out the scum of her people to repair the disaster. Although "hell was at liberty" and "no God could be found," official correspondence teemed with sacred texts and sanctimonious allusions, and prayers were daily publicly read, for it was acknowledged "that religion was a good State policy to keep men in hand." Competition being keenly dreaded by those who bartered with the Company's licence, ill-fared the "Interloper" who fell into the hands of the Factor.

Hourly thinned by disease, harassed by foes on all sides, our countrymen held on to the island with unexampled fortitude. An hereditary race of pirates, the Angrias, for over a century scoured

the seas, extending their vessels in a half moon over a hundred miles of the ocean, intercepting our traders, burning our ships, drowning the crews. Jealous Portuguese Viceroys of Goa, and crafty Captains of Surat, intriguing with native princes, brought down cloud upon cloud of swarthy troops and sanguinary hordes, fully as formidable as the armed levies which at a later day disembowelled the Carnatic, to raze to the earth our castellated battlements and to destroy our fabrics. Contending for the empire of the East with Lusitanean and Dutch, anxious to exclude all other occidental nations from the East Indian trade, our greed occasioned us many appalling reverses. English captives held the umbrella and carried the cloak and rapier of the Hollander in busy marts, English pirates, handcuffed and pinioned, gazed with wonder at the convents, churches, and colleges, and the stately palaces of Abulquerque's wonderful city on their road to the Inquisition's tribunal. Saxon hands kneaded confections and sweetmeats for the priests of Saint Xavier's shrine, and Welsh fingers tuned the lute for the lips of the secluded Lisbon belles. The Puritanical Scotchman, capped and crowned as for an *auto-da-fé*, was borne in derisive procession on the saint's day, and his wife and children passed under the slave auctioneer's hammer. Hindoo freebooters rifled our merchants, embargoed our trade, or had to be conciliated by ruinous and corrupt concessions or outwitted by a policy as tortuous as their own.

Half ambassador, half pedlar our envoys passed through districts overrun with Thugs, Dacoits and predatory tribes either to secure the favour of the Great Moguls, to poison the mind of Jehanghir against our western antagonists or to open a market for mother-of-pearl and sandalwood. More than once the fate of the Colony hung on the nod of a Mahratta Sivajee or Abyssinian Seedee, and the Emperors of Delhi twice threatened its utter annihilation. Our cultivators were protected by warriors to keep off the rural banditti, sentinels stationed on the highest tree top gave timely notice to the ploughman of the approach of the caparisoned elephants and the gold banners of invading hosts, and when travelling to Agra it was under the protection of the native caravan that we threaded the defiles crowned with fastnesses and inaccessible strongholds that lay by the way. The bowstring, or some other kind of equally expeditious murder awaited our traffickers at the Nawab's durbar. British envoys were thrown in closed sacks from mountainous eyries; baskets filled with human heads too frequently bore testimony to the failure of commercial missions. Like a mediæval Italian town, the home of an Este or a Sforza, Bombay was ever plunged in internecine broils, uninteresting as those recorded of the other principalities and powers of the Empire of which she forms part were it not for the evidence they yield us of the splendid tenacity of purpose of our race.

A wise policy of religious toleration initiated by Gerald Aungier—the best of her early governors—was followed in much later times by such men as Mounstuart Elphinstone, Malcolm and Mackintosh. Hence the Banias of Diu, the Bhattias of Cutch and the Jains early took refuge under the shadow of the barbican of her castle, and enriched the proconsular treasury with their several industries. In ships, the exact imitation of the best sailing models from Europe, built by the Parsee refugees, African slaves were freely bought and sold in the insular mart.

And as we float down the stream of time we find Mahratta campaign succeeding to Mahratta campaign, varied by expeditions against Mysore, Malabar and the Angrian pirates. Battles hardly known beyond the narrow limits of their cannon's roar, and which have scarce escaped the Lethe of Forgetfulness which enshròuds the conquests of Jenghis and Tamerlane, are alternately won and lost against barbarian hordes where every man beats a drum, blows a trumpet, fires his matchlock when and how he pleases. Elephants, camels, horses and oxen expire by hundreds amidst piles of slain men on the Indian battlefields over which hovers the vulture and whose scavengers are hunting packs of hyenas. Troops of barbarians, savage as the Goths who swooped down on the Roman empire, are driven like chaff before the wind to their own jungles, or up the paths of their mountain eyries. Native princes,

the Neros or Tiberiuses of their own narrow domains, issue from their inaccessible castles to baffle the tactics of civilised nations. As our century opens we stand on the threshold of mighty events, for Wellesley passes through the streets of Bombay with cannon in his train to win Assaye, not yet dreaming of Waterloo. In later days, and for the second time, Bajee Rao, Peshwa of Poona, intrigues against British power, and at Kirkee, from the hill of Parbuttee, sees the musnud lost to himself and his line for the second time. To Bithoor, on the Ganges, he moodily retires to adopt a son born in the village of Narel, who, better known as the Nana Sahib, was destined to drench Cawnpore with Saxon blood. The policy of annexation then sets in with a full tide, state after state falls into our clutches and the little settlement on the barren coast of western India of some two hundred years back now absorbs the greater part of the Mahratta empire. Whilst our rule shook to its foundations during the Mutiny the Bombay Presidency's troops remained faithful to us, and but two regiments were disbanded, but one private was blown from the guns. Through the exertions of the Bombay Marine the last pirate was at length hung in chains at Kolaba, the Sanganian Corsair no longer swept the seas in his lateen rigged craft, the days of Avory and Buccaneer Kidd were for ever past. Anarchy, misrule and oppression had no longer resistless sway over

the land; our commercial supremacy over every other western nation was established, and potentates with whom revenue had meant war and war plunder became pensioners on an Anglo-Indian exchequer. Like another Rome the insular city had made tributary to herself a territory scarcely less vast than France's.

Meanwhile, agriculture and the industrial arts had been making strides as gigantic as those of war. Jungle and cactus-bush were cleared away, and fair fields arose in which the peaceful oxen ploughed the soil for the receipt of the many strange products of Ind. The ryot became conscious for the first time that his crops would be reaped by his own hands, and not by lawless marauders, and that his hereditary grievances would be redressed. Extensive fields of capsicums or chillies glowing with scarlet, large tracts of yellow cossumba, and acres of tobacco, crowned with flowers of a pale rose colour, met the traveller's eye as he journeyed through the presidency, and, unimpeded, the toddy drawer mounted the palm, a knife in his waist band. As mechanical appliances found their way over the seas, the native weaver deserted the handloom under the shade of the tamarind or banyan tree, and retired before the shaft that sent up wreathing columns of smoke over the pits where his women so recently drew Dacca silks, and made his village air vocal with the sound of the wheel. To European energy no river appeared too formidable

to be bridged ; mountains were tunnelled and honeycombed ; no hilly crest was too precipitous to be crossed by a road. Rail and telegraph seemed to assure our permanent dominion over the empire, and around tracks erewhile scarce affording footing to the goat, the locomotive, at a few hours' notice, carried regiments of soldiery to lend security to the outposts of our civilization. Ships flying the flags of all nations swung at anchor in Bombay harbour ; the products of the distant parts of the world found their way to the poorest native's stall, and as the last ridge of sand was excavated in the trough of the Suez Canal, close intercommunion between East and West was achieved. Differing from the first European settlers who had been disposed to succumb to Oriental luxury and to the languor incident to the Torrid Zone, each generation of white men that followed them became more active, more enterprising, purer in life than their immediate predecessors. Endowed with many of our educational opportunities, by the power of attraction and the force of example, our science and energy became, in a manner, contagious to the beings we ruled. The stagnant Conservatism of the East surrendered to the progressive tendencies of our western generation. The industrial arts once more adorned those realms from which they had emigrated to the occidental world, through the channels of Egypt, Phœnicia, and Greece.

But demoralised by the sudden inflow of capital, an era of speculative enterprise set in in the insular city, which is, perhaps, unparalleled in the annals of commerce. Whilst civil war devastated North and South America, whilst armed vessels prevented any shipment from Transatlantic ports, India was left the sole producer of cotton to the world, and Bombay became the central place for the export of the staple. To the presidency town between the years 1861 and 1866, as to a new Eldorado the millionaire and the pauper alike resorted to speculate on a cargo of goods, to take up shares in joint-stock banks, and to set astir a thousand mercantile projects. The value of land rose to an incredible height, a golden halo spread over every beegah, and money was invested with but little regard in the reclamation of foreshores from the sea. No scheme was too wild to find ample subscribers; financial associations were to be set afloat; the mines of Ophir were to be reopened; lodes, ores, seams of coal, and productive veins prospected and worked. Never were the lying talents of the promoter and reporter more inprudently displayed, never was a market more unscrupulously rigged; it was, indeed, a time of *finesse* and financiering out-rivalling the worst hoaxes of our own Stock Exchange. In their wild greed for money, man forgot honesty, woman her chastity, the Hindoo his caste, the Moslem his mosque; and Englishmen were seen to truckle to the Parsees for a share in some new enterprise,

a coupon in some bubble company. The collector abandoned his cutcherry to speculate in the market, the doctor left his dying patients to consult with his broker, the assistant robbed his employer's till to purchase the gold-yielding scrip. The worst tendencies of the gambler were evoked in the native mind, the lowest coolie sold his bed, his children's garments, his wife's jewels to invest the proceeds in some mad association; sons did not scruple to plunder their parents, and many a convict now drags his chains in the Andaman Isles, for whom the temptations of that gold mania were irresistible. Even the secluded Hindoo lady, actuated by her delirious desires for gems as brilliant as the Koh-i-nur, or that of the great idol at Somnat, forgot her native modesty so far as to be seen in public and unveiled, contracting with the lapidaries of Broach and Cambay for the right of working the mines of Bala and Rantanpoor. At length the crash came; America's ports were re-opened, her cotton fields again sown, the trade of India declined, bank after bank failed, mercantile houses were swept away in the general panic, and for his good rupee many a native found himself in the possession of paper as worthless as French *assignats*. Then the world was presented again with a scene, re-enacted a thousand times, of a vast community impoverished for the enrichment of a few canny and unscrupulous men. Some seventy millions of money had come into the city, of the expenditure of which scarce any trace can be found, unless it

be in the splendour of the public buildings, due to the munificence of the speculators of 1861 and 1866, which now adorn new Bombay.

The colonial town pulled through the crisis, however, and rebuilt its fortunes on better and more stable foundations. Save for the famine of 1877 its prosperity has ever since been on the increase. During that period of unusual distress for India's starving sons, crowds of destitute beings, attenuated as skeletons, groaned in the streets, families died with their flocks by the roadside, and as food could no longer be supplied to the expiring oxen, the bullock cart was drawn by harnessed coolies, and women toiled under the yoke. Yet so powerfully is the idea of subjection to authority implanted in the Hindoo mind, that no riots for food occurred within the presidency, no grain stores were sacked, no insurrection against the capitalist broke out, such as would infallibly have taken place in the European world. When rice failed the native quietly laid down and died, almost uncomplainingly; when the last bangle had been bartered to nourish her child, the mother hid her little one under parched bushes to finish its woes far from her eyes. Wives anxious to save the fleeting life of their offspring disposed of them in sale to merchants, who yet kept a good table, youths bartered their freedom for a sackful of rice, and despairing fathers surreptitiously pledged their only sons for a silver rupee. Commerce was at a standstill, the inexorable sky gave no promise of the annual

rains, the fountain was parched, the channel ran dry. The atmosphere became pestilential with the decay of the unsepulchred dead, and labour and means were alike lacking for the expenses of cremation. The very air itself seemed oppressive with the anguish of millions of starving souls.

But plenteous showers and fructifying rains at length replenished the empty garner. Corn once more grew on the plain, rice in the swamp, and the native again revelled in paddy. Luxuriant fields at the same time exhibited the expanding blossoms, the bursting capsule and the snowy flakes of ripe cotton, and the many other beautiful objects of Indian agriculture. Trade was more extensive than heretofore, commerce returned at a bound, and all traces of famine appeared well-nigh obliterated. The young bullock ploughed more lustily than ever, the husbandman worked more diligently, the merchant found his exports increasing.

And as I awoke and found myself in the terminus of the Great Indian Peninsular Railway at Bombay, in a station scarcely less vast than those of London, glad assurances met me on every side of increasing prosperity, progress, and wealth. Factories, mills, and huge stores had everywhere replaced the forest and jungle, and peaceful homes now covered spots but fifty years since the lair of the wild beast.

Such was the dreamy retrospect an engine's whistle disturbed.

LETTER III.

BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF BOMBAY.

SUNDAY, 3RD JUNE, 1883.

BOMBAY.

I AMUSE myself this morning by climbing the Rajabai Tower erected at the cost of Premchund Roychund, and from the summit of which one commands a view over Bombay. The clock below me is striking the hour of six as I reach the last of the steps, and the chimes have just ended "Thy will be done" to begin "Dies Ira." At an elevation of some two hundred and thirty feet I survey the city, which is spread under me like a map.

Still enveloped in a vaporous mist, harbour and town peacefully slumber. Upon the sea dense wreaths of bluish haze slowly revolve over the leaden and sullen waves. I hear the fall of the breaker rattle on the rock-bounded shore, but can

catch no glimpse of the lateen-rigged craft that sail up and down the Back Bay.

But suddenly the sun shines forth with all his matutinal power, and as if by magic every object becomes as visible as if painted by the shadeless brush of the pre-Raphaelite. Under the fierce rays the sea turns to an opaline blue as intense as that of the skies, and the clouds blush a deep crimson. The land is all gilded about, the misty curtains are lifted away, tree and shrub have a halo of light dancing on their dazzling flowers and leaves. The breeze suddenly drops, and a portentous hush, such as preludes earthquake or hurricane, and born of great heat, falls over the city. But as the shadows retreat from gable, steeple, and roof the somnolent population of seven hundred and seventy-three thousand odd souls awake to their labour.

Women and children, as seen from my solitary eyrie, appear no bigger than ants, and are already walking along the streets to their toil. I can hear the faint jingle of endless bullock carts, now on their way to fetch cotton bales from the docks. The native who has slept on the pavement during the night rises up, yawns, shakes himself, and marches off with his bedding under his arm. Sometimes the coarse mattress and rug are laid on the shoulders of a meek woman, or placed on the head of a tiny girl, who submissively trots off with them as she follows her spouse. These ladies' toilets are speedily made; they just rustle their

attire, sit for a moment on the kerb-stones to brush the white dust from their feet, baked by yesterday's heat, and then start off to their avocations, sweeping fallen leaves or reeking cow dung on the way thence. Vendors of sugar-cane, plaintains, or sweetmeats, squat before their wickerwork baskets after taking up their stations under porticoes, shady trees, or bright glazed umbrellas. The first jingling tramways come by, discharging crowds of sleepy natives with their turbans wrapped up in handkerchiefs, the mouth, throat, and chest protected with multi-coloured wraps "from the cold." Stable doors open, and the syce's naked progeny run around the ponies which are being groomed down for their morning exercise, whilst the careful wives bring forth hay and new fodder, and polish bridle and bit. In the Government Offices the gorgeous sepoy-patrol, with shouldered rifles, mount a languid guard over bullion and Imperial paper. Groups of friends sit down in circular clusters on the pavement to indulge in untiring chatter. Newspaper vendors in turban and fez run to and fro, distributing the last English news; and small boys lead out the Sahib's dogs for their constitutional. A slouching native regiment passes by, turbaned and gaitered, to the sounds of a deafening military band.

The public gardens into which I immediately gaze down are already filling with ayahs and bearers, dancing attendance on the English baby or missy baba. I fancy I hear the cry of the poor

little tots, fevered with last night's dreadful heat, come up to me on the still air. I notice a Eurasian boy, in sailor costume, romping about; and gaudy Parsee children, in satins and silks, already seated at their nurse's feet, are building gravel bungalows, and twig temples, no doubt. Native Abigails, holding umbrellas over the head of their gaily-clad mistresses, thread the numerous paths lined with brilliant tropical flowers. Bronze-faced gillies wheel empty perambulators behind the head handmaids who carry little nurselings astride on the hip, or tenderly clasped around the bejewelled neck. Of Hindoo gyps, pages, and scouts there are a plentiful store, all more or less engaged in teaching lovable bantlings their first steps, guiding the tinsel Hindoo pet's tottering gait, or encouraging the ambulatory effort of the Moslem chitterling, clad in gold and brilliant brocade. Under festoons of flowering creepers, under the arches of the neighbouring University, or asquat on green garden benches, long-robed Arabs and mitred Parsees discuss the morning's local news. Meanwhile the Mawlees or gardeners, dusky of hue, and with but a rag round the loins, water the thirsty beds from the dripping skins they bear inflated on their attenuated hips, holding the nozzle in front.

Far on my southern side lies Kolaba, its lighthouse shimmering on the blue sea, the waves on its shores glancing and glinting like well-burnished steel. The military tents on the edge of the spit.

of parched sand look no larger than mushrooms grown up in a night. Far in the distance thin columns of smoke testify that the numerous blocks of cotton mills have already started their thousands of spindles. The feathery tufts of the palm, the spiked leaves of the tattered plaintain might be cut in iron or bronze, so immovable do they seem. In arid compounds tall bungalows, painted in yellow and picked out with blue, are too dazzling to look fixedly on. Through an atmosphere tremulous with the motion of quivering heat, I catch glimpses of long stretches of scorched grass, bare and colourless, where all life has been calcined away. Roads, yellow as the Sahara, after running past palmyra-leaved shanties, bazaar huts, houses, and a Parsee Dhurrumsala, or "refuge for Zoroastrian sojourners," flow like Deltaic streams on the Maidan or esplanade. And round and round this esplanade the European is even now taking his morning ride, clad in linen clothes, white tropical hat, and wearing Wellington boots with shining spurs. Helter skelter courses the Arabian steed disturbing the impudent crows ranged along the white railings and astonishing by his gambols and caracoles the many natives cleaning their teeth with sticks under the circle of trees. The Parsee still reverently prays on the sea beach, or walking homewards with his brass lotah or bowl full of holy salt-water, looks mighty devout. Zoroastrian ladies in family groups of half a score are

taking an airing and watching the brown-sailed boats rising out of the sea. Around the public wells coolies revolve the creaking wheels whilst women chatter as they wring out the garments they have but just cleansed, or walk off with chatties and pyramidal pots upon the head.

Many magnificent buildings are situate in my immediate vicinity which outrival those of the handsomest cities of Europe. The huge Secretariat, the Post and Telegraph Offices, the High Court of Justice may well be designated as being palatial. But more immediately before me the native town, at a mile's distance, stretches its irregular roofs, the whole being bounded by Malabar Hill, with bungalows perched on its crest—the only high land in Bombay. Kolaba forms one of the horns of the Back Bay, this Malabar Hill being the other. Between these two points the crescent-shaped shore takes an inland curve and along its yellow beach I successively see the tall palms of the Mussulman Burying Ground, rocky Chowpatty, the Cliff, and the sea-girt promontory of Walkeshwar.

To my right hand stretches a district chiefly inhabited by Parsees and called "The Fort," though the old rampart of stone which once enclosed this locality has long since been carted away. The houses here are mostly four to five storeys high, and the frontages are protected with many projecting eaves. These habitations are brightly painted in yellow, white, or in blue, but

some householders with a taste for variety do not scruple to daub their lintels and balconies in brilliant gold or in startling ochres. Mats of cool grass, otherwise "tatties," hang from the casements, and in the verandahs at the foot of the houses servants are leaping up from their beds as the masters come out to be shaved and shampooed. Mobeds, or Parsee priests, are bustling in and about the doors, for every Sabeen keeps his own family chaplain to read daily prayers and to tend his house-fire. In cane-bottomed chairs with prodigiously long arms, the ladies of the different establishments chatter at the thresholds as they await the bright bullock-carts that will take many of them to the market. A motley crowd has gathered around the Fire Temple, and great no doubt is the gabble now going on from the open liturgical books. The streets turn and wind in sinuous curves, and everywhere in the glare of the sun long vistas of colour, dark overhanging roofs, hooded windows, brilliant balconies, and streams of gaily clad people puzzle the eye. At the garish stall of the liquor seller, from the gaudily coloured bottles, bibacious Parsees are sipping their quantum of matutinal toddy. With bat, ball and stumps, and waited on by his nurse, the youthful Zoroastrian goes off to play cricket.

In this part of the town most of the European well-to-do shops are situate. The wealthiest Parsees and English merchants have their offices and warehouses here, but as this is the Sabbath

all the godowns and stores are shuttered and under padlock and key. In the lanes and alleys a great deal of washing of beds or vile cooking is now going on.

To the west stands the Tower of the Anglican Cathedral, the pointed spire of the Scotch Church, Elphinstone Circle, the Apollo Bunder with its saluting battery of twenty-one guns, and the Yacht Club built in the Swiss Châlet style. Her Majesty's statue shimmers as if it were made of white snow, and the Prince of Wales gallantly rides his bronze steed, which by this time must be melting indeed. Even the pebbles by the roadside refract the sun's rays like the many facets of newly cut diamonds.

Still further westwards Mazagon with its docks, its temples, its busy trade is no doubt filling the morning air with bewildering din and bellringing, but no sound of the clamour reaches me, so far off do I stand. Then beyond the city the harbour stretches out its wide expanse of blue waters, dotted with ships, buggalows, patemars, and native craft. Steam vessels from all parts of the world, and whistling traders just off to far Malabar, Karrachi, Aden, China, or Europe, are slowly gliding along the lines of anchored shipping as they majestically thread the intricacies of the hot and thirsty Archipelago. The hills in the distance bound in the port, and through the distant blue haze I see the palm covered peaks of Elephanta, the rugged outlines of Caranjah

and Matheran. Thus having circulated my vision from Kolaba on my southern side, to the Esplanade and native town on my east, with Malabar Hill on my north, I complete the circle by ending with the fort, the harbour, and Mazagon on the west.

Thus viewed from a height Bombay has perhaps a more Europeanised appearance than any other city of India. Here one would look in vain for the traceried architecture of ancient Jeypore, the ghats of Benáres, the tanks of Delhi, the jewelled domes of Agra. Fruitlessly would one search for the great mausoleums of fair white marble sparkling with Cornelian jasper and lapis-lazuli which adorn the tombs of the Moslem conquerors of Ahmedabad. World famed mosque, minaret and cupola have no abiding place in this arena of new civilisation, and of the three or four forms of architecture that have run their course over the East there is scarce a relic amongst us. All the houses wear a novel aspect and not one single roof can lay claim to antique artistic beauty or original quaintness. No native palace uprears its coloured pinnacles in the blue ether, the sunlight flashes on no famous shrine, the noisy sparrows rest their insolent pinions on no renowned Buddhist tope. Pavilions worked with frettings of sapphire and carbuncle do not glitter around artificial lakes or jewelled bath-room, and the rebeck of the slave girl is not heard through ornate Saracenic windows. Indeed the expansive ocean of tiled roofs has almost the monotony of the acres of chimney

pots of our English Metropolis, but happily the sky is as yet undimmed by the terrible scourge of London smoke. The elephant does not come plodding down the wide thoroughfares, and I never yet saw camel or dromedary tethered under the palms. The manners and customs of the natives are also less Oriental than in places not so immediately under European influence.

The principal port for the export of cotton, and the key to India, Bombay is indeed a thoroughly commercial and not a picturesque city. But if greatly deficient in colour, in quaintness in Oriental cachet and character, on the other hand it is vastly superior to most other towns in Hindostan in activity and enterprise. Callousness and indolence which hang so benumbingly over so many populous places in the East have comparatively few irreclaimable devotees here. The energies of the rising generation are not paralysed by the bigotry of a faith preaching inertness and contemplation instead of action, creeds inculcating a moral paralysis of the faculties seem almost exploded, and the admixture of western men of energy with the torpid millions of India has restored the Aryan to his pristine vigour and elasticity. All is bustle and money making, and the atmosphere itself seems impregnated with something of that electric life one so perceptibly feels when treading the pavements of our great western marts. Thousands of well-pressed cotton bales come groaning along in

bullock carts, the shafts of the foundry throws up its columns of smoke, and to think of the alarming din of the copper bazaar suffices to give one a headache. The latest European inventions have found their way out to us, for the telephone bell rings in our offices, the Jablochkoff candle illumines our streets.

And populous as the city is one is not distressed by the sight of the squalor and poverty of our occidental capitals, and the wretchedness of our English manufacturing towns. The native's wants are but few, a little rice feeds him, water quenches his thirst, scanty rags clothe him, an anna, or three-halfpence a day, keeps him alive. For the greater part of the year he can live and sleep in the open air, free of taxes and rent, and during the rains a shelter under a hut costs him but a copper pice or a handful of paddy per diem. If he can save a rupee or two at the end of the twelvemonth from the produce of his industry he is infinitely easy and satisfied; and his thoughts at once revolve on a marriage feast for the nuptials of his infant children or some religious ceremony. I do not indeed intend to aver that there are not some incomparably fetid hovels in Bombay, filthy and haunted by the demons of fever, dysentery and cholera, and which present such a forcible contrast to all western preconceptions of the gorgeous East. But to find these one must leave the leading thoroughfares, and hideous dens do not stare

one in the face at every corner as they do in East London or in our provincial mining towns. The Parsees have not one single public beggar amongst their caste, Hindoo and Mahommedan mendicants are not excessively importunate, and the wayfarer is not so often troubled by the whining appeal and written statement of misery of the ophthalmic blind as elsewhere in the East.

Vice of course exists to a large extent, as it necessarily must where men are so thickly herded together. But it is more picturesque and often less repulsive than in Paris or in our great Metropolis. The Hindoo seeks his paramour amongst the dancing girls of his temple, or selects her from the caste women that twirl their arms fantastically as they pass down the streets in the gloaming, selling their smiles. These Bayadères are not contemned as our English courtezans are, their profession is even respected, and they appear to have no sense of shame, but one of ingenuous sensuality as they respond to the whispered signal. The errant Hindoo widow seeks the adulterous couch of the Brahmin, or the cot of her spiritual guide, but other lovers she can with difficulty assign. Mahommedans behind the screens of the house of ill-fame find solace for the quarrels of the Harem in the embraces of the tawdry dark-lidded favourites, resplendent in barbaric silk vestments, and softly alluring as they indolently smoke their chibouks. Parsees patronising, even in their carnal desires, the vices of

western people, whose civilization they have assumed, pursue German girls, who are exported hither to make rapid fortunes as prostitutes. Camateepoorra offers a scene unparalleled in any city I have ever yet seen. There the Teutonic queen, the Greek Thais, the Jewish Delilah, the Saxon *fille-de-joie* at eve, recline before their doorways in transparent robes, spangled with tinsel, quivering with sequins, and loudly solicit attention, whilst the native Messalina, more modestly dressed, lisps out the word "darling" as she crouches on the earthen floor of her hut. But this only occurs at night in a very limited district, and the wayfarer will never be shocked in Bombay by scenes like those which daily go on in the Strand. I leave unenumerated those horrible crimes against nature which Christianity has almost extirpated from Europe, but which still are rife in every great city of India. English sailors, just landed ashore, often raise a "tama-sha," come to blows, knock off the turbans of Bhattia and Jain, insult the Bania, and send a thrill of alarm throughout a whole district. Now and again a European may be seen staggering to and fro vilely drunk, but the indigene if he gets intoxicated usually takes care to do it at home. Pale and wan, absent in mind and titubating in gait the opium-smoker is occasionally met with.

The kidnapping of little native children on account of the rich jewellery and the silken garments they wear is, I think, the most prevalent

crime. Accounts may daily be read in the local newspapers of aborigenes drugged with soporifics for the purpose of stealing their cash. Frequently a servant is brought before the magistrate for stealing his master's attire or making away with his mistress's cashmeres and embroideries. Fines imposed for furious driving fill the greater part of the criminal columns. The European usually is the only perpetrator of brutal assault or battery. Felony and forgery are tolerably rife, perjury a daily occurrence, and murder is not very uncommon. Suicide is prevalent with both the Hindoo and the Mussulman, and the mania for self-destruction has at times run very high with the Parsee, and has only been checked by threats of *post-mortem* examination on the defunct. Life and property are, however, more secure here than in England.

Oh! but how tired you must be of this statistical gabble that surely resembles yonder insolent crow's, who with its beak agape and its hot wings held apart from its sweltering body stands and jabbars at me. I fancy I see you sigh and hear you asking yourself if I shall never leap off my pedagogue's stool, come down from my tower, and fall to more private matters. Well, dear friend, I have descended at length from Premchund Roychund's edifice, and will—the heat permitting—answer the queries of your recent letter. . . .

LETTER IV.

BOMBAY HARBOUR.

MONDAY, 4TH JUNE, 1883.

BOMBAY.

GAILY our little craft scudded as it was borne along by a stiff monsoon breeze over the little sea called Bombay Harbour. The triangular sail bellied out to the wind, the ropes strained as if they would break, the mast creaked, the hulk danced up and down over the green rollers, and the long tract of glistening foam we left behind us was iridescent like snow under the fierce glare of the sun. Under the awning we leisurely smoked, talked intermittently and lazily enjoyed one of the most splendid sights this world affords.

To the right, far in the distance, rose sheer out of an emerald and glistening sea the Hills of Matheran, lofty Mallangadh, and the ranges of the mainland. Bathed in a beautiful violet light

that crept up their dark, rugged slopes and overhung their summits in glorious coruscating rays, their ethereal vesture, their tinted reflections in a cloudless sky defied all the powers of the best colourist. At Suez only when the sun rises on the hills turning them to rose, purple, and gold, and all the earth glows like a casket have I seen such a scene. But here crest, tableland, rocky pinnacle, headland and acclivity were less defined than those of the African shores, the outlines of the ridges less traceable. The rays of the sun were fully as implacable, but the vapour distilling from the huge bodies of water of the Indian Ocean into chameleon-hued wreaths are less lovely than the delicate vapourlets occasionally seen floating on the Red Sea. Each curling wave was tinged with the solar beam, the atmosphere was all aglow with the heat, and far in the distance the Western Ghauts or Appenines of the East, towering in rude magnificence, inaccessible in appearance as the peak of Chimborazo, were mantled o'er with the unrivalled harmony of the tints of the brush of the Creator. Incontinently light yellow clouds, sure harbingers of a freshening gale, floated out in the serene depth of the blue overhead.

To the left, on a low sandy shore almost level with the breaking wave, lay the town of Bombay. On the edge of the promontory we saw Kolaba with its churches and barracks, then came numerous wharves crowded with native craft,

the Apollo Bunder with its quay of glistening stone, endless ranges of buildings, interspersed with the palm, the Docks of Mazagon, the low lying shores behind which is nestled the pretty English cemetery of Sewree. The Clock Tower stood over the city like another Pharos over another Alexandria, here and there a steeple shone most beautifully white against the intensely blue sky, ever and anon a picturesque building peeped forth out of its covert of green foliage finely contrasting with the dark mango and tamarind groves which embosomed it. The distant din of the city came to us over the waters like the indistinct murmur of a huge human hive, now and again the clang of a temple bell floated out seawards, but suddenly the electrically laden air seemed to vibrate as the deep boom of nine minute guns told us that yet another native prince had come to Bombay. And as the eye followed the wide extent of sea frontage of this imperial town, glancing over the corrugated iron roofs of its manufactories, its peaked warehouses, the hydraulic cranes, the steam drags, the lading shoots, the large stacks of corn, the piles of wood, had it not been for the Oriental atmosphere and tropical scenery dispersed around we could well have imagined ourselves gliding past some five miles of the busiest banks of the Thames ; say from Greenwich to London Bridge. Very often is the island compared to Tyre and Sidon and all embracing Carthage, but it resembles those ancient mercantile

emporiums only in the extent of its commerce. In vain would the artist seek here for the colossal moles and piers of marble from which the precious woods for the building of Solomon's temple were shipped to Tarshish and Joppa. Uselessly would he search for such an arsenal as that in which Hannibal's beaked galleys erewhile rode at anchor in Maegara or for granaries extensive as Egyptian tombs in which rich Punic merchants stored cassia and nard. A utilitarian civilization has stamped this corner of India with its cheap architecture, and has built nothing eternal on its level shores.

But happily the day was so fine, the wind so soft, the rhythmical beat of the waves so sweet, that the spirit of discontent—divine though it may be—could find no abiding place in the brain. As quickly as it had arisen it passed away, and we once again relapsed into an euthanasia as complete as an opium smoker's paradisiacal state. Five miles of glistening ocean stretched from shore to shore; the sea flowed in between the hills on one side and the sandy flats on the other, debouching towards the north on Thana, Bassein, and the open sea running directly southwards to meet the Arabian tide. In this wide estuary, almost as land locked as a Canadian freshwater lake, and forming a harbour scarcely less capacious than Sydney's and more amplitudinous than our own Portsmouth's, many an island was dotted about. Yonder in the distance stood Elephanta crowned with the

palm, opposite it Trombay, with a glistening mosque half buried in rich vegetation, nearer Butcher's Isle covered with barrack arrangements for military quarantine, and from whose shores many a pirate had swung. Caranja brought to memory many a daring deed of the native despot, Salsette put us in mind of salt pans glistening like the facets of crystal, Oyster Isle of pearl fisheries long since abandoned, whilst here and there a barren rock or two with its old-fashioned defences carried us back to the days of our struggling settlement. As sunny, shadeless, and scarcely less picturesque than the Grecian Archipelago each little isle stood in its emerald setting; a crest of foam around its shelving sides, a poised seabird flying over its peak.

Opposite the town of Bombay, but drawn up in many irregular lines, as if to bombard the city, the greater part of the shipping of the port rocked at an easy anchor, all sails reefed, all tight and trim on board. Here two monitors, painted white, iron turreted, our sole defenders plashed upon the chains that moored them to yonder dancing buoys. There flotillas of buggalows or native craft, curiously built, sharp beaked, high pooped in the stern like Spanish galleons, and with sea boards daubed with cheques of black and white, wore an appearance as offensive as an ancient war frigate's. Modern European vessels of heavy tonnage were awaiting to take in grain or to discharge English bricks; some had but just done coaling, others were wash-

ing decks, all more or less were puffing and hissing. Steamships belonging to the fleets of the Peninsula and Oriental Company, the British India Navigation Company, the Hall line, the Anchor line, and Raphael Rubbatino's line, steamed past to dock trailing long spiral wreaths of smoke in the clear air. Barges and ketches heavily laden with cardamon, rice, indigo, pepper, poppies, or seed were destined to provide cargoes for vessels far out in the stream, whilst flat-bottomed craft took landwards British machinery, Saxon gunpowder, and Rhenish wines. Coolies passing up and down giddy planks bore wicker-work baskets full of native products from lighters to the ships' holds, encouraging themselves during their labours with a song. Coloured cloths almost rivalling the gaudy chintzes of Coromandel, but made of cotton grown in New Orleans and woven in Lancashire, and which would shortly attire the Hindoo girl, made their way to shore in the dingy. That the shuttle of the Manchester lass flies fast for the Moslem lady we very well saw when a craft deeply laden with rich and barbaric silks piloted past us. Laden with the opulent fabrics of the Indies for bulk and value the cargoes that now floated in this imperial port might have borne comparison with the docks of mediæval Venice or Genoa. The native brigantines had laid tribute on the Persian Gulf for perfumes and ores not to be found on other shores, and the western fleet had penetrated to the utmost confines of the

ocean which environs the world for spices and fine linen. The sea was covered with the multitude of huge hulks, bunting floated out from a forest of masts, the Royal pennant of England was in close proximity to the ensign of Russia. Galleys and steam pinnaces curveted in and out of the rows of the fishing boats, and the regular plash of the oars of the man-of-war's boat was varied by the stertorous puff of the tug. Yet in a few days at the approach of the long delayed monsoon these masses of shipping would clear away, for the storm winds lash the harbour into wild fury and render anchorage insecure.

We found that a dhow which had just returned from Jeddah was discharging pilgrims from the sacred shrines of Mecca and Medina into a numerous squadron of felucca-rigged jollyboats. Veiled women, attenuated boys, reverend and bearded men were piled up in these native crafts as uncomfortably as a shipwrecked crew in a lifeboat. Most rueful did they look, most vilely did they smell, travel-stained and inexpressibly dirty were they. Some of the tawdry bulky boxes had already been opened, scarves and brilliant gauzes were being adjusted over the filthiest linen, a few passengers were performing what was probably a rare ablution in the crystalline sea. Females who appeared to be already sufficiently disguised in rough cloth mantles falling from head to foot were being still further covered up from the gaze of man by friendly attendants. One poor soul,

wrapped as cruelly as a mummy, with her eye-holes bandaged with a silk scarf, sat in a cabin already almost hermetically closed from the outer world by a series of blinds. Another impeded by the many folds of her clumsy draperies and by her two pairs of slippers awkwardly enough clambered down the ladder that did duty for a gangway. Her little child was clad in a coarse blue gown of calico, a yahmak or veil was pinned over the mouth, a little strip of black ribbon was arranged from the hood, and transversely separated the brow, thus allowing the fierce black eyes full liberty to rove to and fro. In a loose frock ornamented with flowers and girdled with a sash of curious texture an African negress, probably purchased in some Eastern slave mart, strutted up and down deck, her jet-black hair tucked under a crimson kerchief, her low and bestial face rippling with self-satisfied smiles. With patient and laborious vituperation the pilgrim captain, wearing a striped blanket, insulted his departing passengers for having found fault with the accommodation provided on board. But the number of families who had chartered his vessel were too busy with their own affairs to mind his invectives, and the newly-made Hadjees looked mild and peaceful enough. Meanwhile the health officers narrowly scrutinised the rabble crew, looking out sharply for the cases of cholera they so often spread in the city, peering into the bales of fetid linen, where children covered with fly marks fit-

fully lay. Punting with the long pole of bamboo, howling and vociferating at the full compass of his voice, the boatmen recklessly piloted their living freights towards the landing stage. With dark brown sails filled out with the breeze, the coxswain squatting like an ape on the extreme ledge of the stern, the seats filled with chattering folk, the scullers at the prow, these brightly painted crafts were not unpicturesque.

Soon tired of sailing, and fond of variety, we clambered up the gangway of one of Her Majesty's troopships. Military officers in uniform were already patrolling the decks, whilst their pale and ailing but excited daughters and wives were eagerly looking forward to their departure for England in a few minutes. Flat-bottomed boats laden with soldiers, every now and again poured fresh contingents of living souls into the huge floating ark. Victims to fever or dysentery, livid and haggard, we wondered if many of them might not find a last resting-place in the waves of the Red Sea, there to await the Great Resurrection when the ocean shall give up her dead. Even the conventional irrepressibility ascribed to the sergeant's wife, seemed affected by the hot climes she was just on the point of leaving, and it appeared likely that she would have to be some days at sea before she regained her matronly aggressiveness. Drum-majors, in almost tearful tones, were describing the trouble they had had with the helpless and uncontrollable women-kind during the march down.

Endless piles of regimental baggage found its way to the open hatches, lieutenants were calling the roll-call, which was probably never more eagerly answered; sentinels paraded the bridges, sheep, pigs, hencoops, and hutches full of cackling and rustling feathers were coming on board, and an ox was hoisted over the side. There was a sound of jingling glasses and enthusiastic recognitions in the saloons, there were hurrahs for at length being taken away from a land of boundless dissociations and antipathies, the faces of the departing ones looked most wonderfully happy, whilst those who remained behind appeared as cheerless as angels excluded from Paradise. Many a merry head was thrust out at the three tiers of portholes, duns were despatched after plaguing their creditors for possibly the last time; Parsee money-changers were handing the pound sterling for the silver rupees; the inevitable juggler was showing his well-known tricks to an audience who scarce knew how to feel ill-humoured or bored. Subalterns had already sold their horses at up-country stations to half-a-dozen purchasers, and the female element, from the corporal to the general's wife, had not yet had time to freeze into sets and cliques. The last letter, the last telegram from an Indian comrade was torn hurriedly open, and pleasant it was to see that even monstrous and all-absorbing selfishness had left the eye not incapable of generous tears for the exiles of the Torrid Zone. But not the least touching sight was a poor ayah,

sorrowfully taking leave of the babe that had been entrusted to her charge, and who, with childish ingratitude, crooned with delight in her arms at the novelty of the snowy white awnings, the glistening brasses, and the canvas-covered boats. When we were once again seated in our little craft, we saw this poor handmaid tripping down the gangway quite broken-hearted, gesticulating after the pronounced fashion of Oriental grief. Meanwhile, at the masthead, telescope in hand, trim middies were taking their last observations.

But a bell tinkled, the anchor was heaved, the screw slowly revolving lashed the waves into foam, and the troopship slowly swung round to make her way to those dear shores to which we may never return. A gallant sight it was to see the huge Leviathan of an ocean steamer pass under the shade of the hills; energetically we answered the handkerchiefs energetically waving over her bulwarks, and followed her course till she seemed swallowed up in the sea. Then to restore our fallen spirits we bade our crew favour us with a native musical ditty, well knowing that they will sing for hours at a time without showing the slightest signs of fatigue. Gladly, and unabashed, they responded to our invitation, and we were soon cutting the waves to the sound of probably the most horrible cacophany the human lungs ever shouted. Meanwhile the sun sank gloriously into the gilded ocean, the breeze slightly fell, and the vapours of eve rolled in immense volume over the harbour. The sea changed

its blue colour, the lovely tints of azure and ultramarine assumed the dark hues of the mantling gloom, and its depths seemed to become tumultuous and confused. In and out of the fishing poles our little vessel dodged around and about, and when the untiring vocalists became too vociferous for occidental tympanums, we silenced them, and they told us tales of the sharks that abound in these waters.

Wretchedly clothed, feeding on a pittance of rice and putrid fish, our Moslem crew had, nevertheless, somewhat of the joviality the sea ever seems to impart to those who dwell on her waters, and were far less taciturn than the land-lovers of their race. Two of their little children were on board, for all the family save the wives seemed to find occupation within the narrow compass of these painted planks. One charming boy was sent aloft, and dauntlessly clambered over the lengthy spars, making far more use of his toes for prehensile purposes than of his fingers. This juvenile believer in fatalism might have shown the European gymnastic tricks which would have put our best acrobatic performers to the blush. The recklessness of life among the people of India is indeed marvellous.

But more than one hour ago three guns fired from Malabar Hill had announced the mail to be signalled, and suddenly she came gliding into the harbour, her cabins one blaze of light, a host of eager passengers in her forecastle. Slowly she

steamed past the hundred of vessels already illuminated with dancing lanterns, and her whistle rang through the night air. In a moment she was abreast of us ; in a minute more we trod on her deck to welcome old Anglo-Indian cronies and English acquaintances. On the bridge we found several Parsees who had but just returned from a trip to Europe, and were brimful of new knowledge and possibly of western vices. Near the wheel we discovered small groups of planters and engineers, coming out to invest labour and capital on Oriental fields or Indian mines. Under the awning a Member of Council was doing the lardy-dardy to scores of fine ladies. Cook's globe-trotters were already immersed in their guide-books, and a Yankee was fully prepared to draw comparisons between his almighty shores and ours, needless to say disparaging to the latter. A high-born lady of our aristocracy still played her whist impassively by the light of a fluttering lamp ; the open piano was perfectly deserted ; officers and their wives puzzled the brains of stewards and stewardesses about their mountains of baggage, and beings who had lost the love of their country or forfeited the love of their relations, were enthusiastically hailing the Indian strand. Surrounded by his swarthy escort, ciceroned by a resident, a native prince swaggered to and fro, full of new consequence derived from a State visit to Buckingham Palace. A few Mahommedans had changed the Oriental costume for our own, and the noble turban

had made way for the hideous fez with its bullion tassel. We shuddered at the thoughts of the penances a travelling Hindoo would have to go through before being restored to the privileges of his caste, which he had lost by the impurities contracted in journeying across the nations that lie beyond the dark water, or "kalee panee." We found the cooing of a newly-wedded couple, now out on their honeymoon trip, less wearisome than a disquisition on the Eucharist carried on between two Jesuits of note, who, having fallen under the grave censure of their Church, were banished to foreign climes for a fixed period to learn obedience to spiritual rule. And here present was many a missionary, undaunted by the perils of great waters, or the wickedness of man, who, like a new Saint Paul, came hither to conquer new shores to the Cross.

Meanwhile the good ship had anchored off the Apollo Bunder, and after seeing the mails for every part of India safely despatched ashore, we followed the first passengers to the landing stage. What a happy, uproarious evening was that which we passed with our old friends newly found. What enquiries we made for those at home. Our laughter was scarcely less loud than the rising gale's blast.

LETTER V.

THE CAVES OF ELEPHANTA.

TUESDAY, 5TH JUNE, 1883.

BOMBAY.

THE boat cast her anchor by the side of the jetty roughly formed of huge blocks of concrete held together with iron clamps. Between the interstices of this rude pier snakes crawled in the muddy ooze of the shore, and slimy creatures stirred in a liquid as black as themselves. Stepping with care and as fast as possible along the artificial causeway, I soon reached the strand of Elephanta or Garipuri. The island is a range of trap hills, divided in the centre by a deep ravine, but rising to a height of some five hundred feet.

I was at once greeted by a semi-nude throng of clamorous boys who would fain have persuaded me to buy curious birds' nests intertwined with fish bones, walking sticks knobbed like the oak, or

votive chaplets of jasmine. Others still more earnestly volunteered to act as my guides, but being anxious to enjoy the scene in solitude, by alternate threats and baksheesh I persuaded them to desist following me. Suddenly becoming dumb to their vociferous questionings and nodding my head by way of pretence I could not understand their mother-tongue I successfully out-mancœuvred these Indian cicerones.

Left once again in peace I leisurely ascended the wide and paved flight of steps that up the island slopes lead to the caves. The vegetation on my either hand was sunburnt and parched, the numerous cactus thickets had split with the heat, and the leaves on the shrubs were shrivelled and black. Alongside the ascending walk a few brab palms gave scanty shade, well-grown mangoes and tamarinds threw a black bar or two over the stones, and amidst grass, white as flax, I saw spotted lizards dart hither and thither.

Again and again I turned round to survey the view of the palm groves below me, the jetty, alongside which picturesque craft were riding at anchor, the sea iridescent and flashing like a diamond. Beautiful did the Bombay Archipelago look under the cloudless blue sky and the distant city seated on a yellow shore appeared like another Venice on another Adriatic. I could catch sight of the forest of masts of her ships that rode in her harbour, and the buildings poetised by the distance might have been taken for long stretches

of sea-girt palaces. Trombay, the hills of the Konkan, and many a sandy flat island or green peaked and palm crested islet completed a prospect basking in the glare of a June day. I followed with my eyes the windings of the emerald-coloured estuaries which led out to the ocean, and my dazzled sight was refreshed by a glimpse of the dark slopes and verdure of the mainland.

At a modest bungalow I paid a small fee to the retired pensioner who acts as guardian and conservator of the treasures of Elephanta. A few strides around a mass of black boulders brought me in full view of the caves. I stood in front of these subterranean cloisters and started aback with mingled emotions of delight and astonishment.

Dug out of the solid rock to a depth of more than one hundred and twenty feet and of nearly equal width the huge cavern stood before me with an opening of some twenty feet high. Four series of solid and massive pillars uniform in their order and placed at regular distances ran down its entire length, and at the far end of the principal vista I caught sight of the colossal triune-headed Mahadeo. The intra-mural air was of a bluish tint that seemed singularly weird and befitting the solemn and august abode of the Hindoo pantheon. It added increased grandeur to the vast space and almost hallowed its precincts. Dark and frowning eaves of rock, covered with but a

scanty grass, projected over the mouth, and from the anfractuositities of the hilly scarp a cascade trickled as it leapt down into a pool as frigid as that which lies under a cave when the tide has retired. No ray of sunshine appeared to have ever touched these pellucid depths into quickening life, and one might well have hesitated before plunging the hand in the circling wavelets lest it should be withdrawn a petrification. The dark and stupendous chamber reminded me of the natural caverns and oratories of the Sea Gods of wild Sark, under whose fretted roofs beings too monstrous to be comprehended by man's imagination seem at one time to have had their dwelling place. Here, too, was the same volcanic appearance, the same signs of earth's throes in her conflagration as one is accustomed to find around the sublime alembics of Etna and Stromboli.

I have entered the tombs of the Pharaohs with feelings less reverend than those with which I now entered the ruins of Garipuri. I have seen the endless friezes of Ellora, the groined roof of Karli, and threaded the labyrinth of the Kennery Caves, but nowhere have I been so enchanted as here. Possibly the beauty of the surrounding scenery and the smooth, pleasing sail hither may have predisposed me to a tone of appreciation not usually lavished by the Anglo-Indian on these architectures. Indeed the caves do not cover more than two acres of ground, boast of an antiquity not probably more remote than the tenth

century, are insignificant in size when compared with structures of the same kind in other parts of the Empire, and are terribly damaged by the cannon of the Portuguese. What the hand of time has not been able to deface the blind zeal of bigots, and the mischievous tricks of modern barbarians has very nearly destroyed. The iconoclasm of Islam has committed no wanton destruction, but to the Feringi tourist must be attributed much recent mutilation.

I think it ever heightens the poesy of a structure to fix one's mind on the mechanical means employed in its construction. Unfortunately no records are extant of the appliances used for fashioning these masses of rock, and no account has been handed down of the manner in which the scales and flakes of stone that fell from the chisel of the mighty and cunning workers have been removed. No doubt the instruments were as rude as those which moulded the sides of the Pyramids, or shaped the Druidical stone on its lone and isolated promontory. But what visions rise before the mind's eye of busy Hindoos remorselessly hollowing out the ocean-girt isle! What evocations of artisans fashioning out giant doorkeepers, a deity's bracelets, or a monkey god's curls, possibly believing they would ensure salvation thereby as surely as our mediæval stone-masons, for whom the carving of a cathedral oriel or an altar screen was tantamount to a pass into Paradise. Native opinion would have us believe

the caves were hollowed out by the commands of a Kannara king named Banasura, whose daughter, Usha, dedicated herself to virginity in these lonely chambers. Local tradition attributes their construction to the Pandavas when in banishment or to Alexander the Great, but to either one or other of these heroes all massive structures in the East, the architects of which are unknown, are assigned. Recent conjecture is too wild to merit serious attention, and the name of the founder is likely to remain a mystery.

Friezes decorate the side aisles, or rather groups of Hindoo deities, cut so freely from the living rock that they seem to start from it and hang to it but by the back. The faces are mostly expressionless, but serene, clear cut, and have a look of eternity and satiated voluptuousness about them such as one sees on the thick-lipped and heavy-lidded deities of Egypt. Occasionally gigantic in build, but more often life-size, these gods and goddesses hang from the roof to within a few feet of the yellow and uneven earthen floor of the cave. Less rigid than the sculptures of the Serapeum, they nevertheless lack both the grace and the truthfulness of the Egyptian art. Little attempt is made at correct delineation, the figures are jointless, the cheeks are smooth, the limbs devoid of muscle, the tendons of sinews. Yet they possess a *cachet* so peculiarly their own, as has all Hindoo architecture, that if placed amidst a host of the works of other styles, the merest tyro

would at once recognise them as coming from India. In their form and features one at once recognises the same ethnic peculiarities as are found in the modern aborigines, the same effeminacy of expression, the same indolent sloth of attitude. The principal male head-dress is the Royal tiara, a trace of which survives to this day in the gilded mitre worn by Hindoo bridegrooms at the wedding procession. None of the male divinities sport the turban, but in many other respects their dress is much the same as that worn at present. The female figures are not clad in the bodice, nor are their robes thrown over the shoulder, otherwise their attire is nearly that which is now seen in our Bombay streets. The ornaments of ear, neck, and bosom are similar to those carried by the female population of Gujeerat and the Konkan, but the nose-ring is conspicuously absent. It has been well said that the gods, with their hands jauntily set on the hanging waistband, the sacred Brahminical thread of ropes of pearl encircling the chest, the loose hair over the neck, the tall, three-plated crown, and the fan-like ruff at the back of the head, have a most martial bearing. Several of them have their locks curled and falling in ringlets, after the approved fashion of Sassanian art, and their attendant dwarfs wear a species of barrister's wig.

Sadly damaged by exposure to the monsoons of ten centuries and the ravages of the iconoclast,

very many figures are headless, armless, or truncated, or so defaced as to be unrecognisable except by the omniscient archæologist. The monkey, the elephant-headed Ganesa, the dancing Apsaras, decorate the outlying and smaller caves, which are so full of rubbish and *débris* that it is often as difficult to enter them as it is to thread the passages leading to a Pharaohonic sarcophagus. Several of the heavy pillars of the great central hall are as massive as those of an Egyptian temple, and having been completely worn away at the base by the force of the elements, their shafts and capitals hang from the roof like stalactites. The aspect of such of the columns as are yet entire is most natural, for although they form part of the living rock, a skilful artist has given them an appearance of groaning under the stupendous weight of the roof which is most appropriate. Fallen pieces of sculpture, portions of broken faces, disrupted limbs strewn on the uneven floor, are heaped around the drums of shallow fluted pillars. Now and again one stumbles over a stony visage with swollen eyes, teeth set, and showing a long hanging tusk at the corner of the mouth, or maybe one trips against the remains of a fat flying cherub, the swan-seated Buddha, or an elf in a tall cylindrical hat seated before a damaged but opening plaitain. Amidst the *débris* are many carved arms still holding the discus, the mace, or the lotus; the trident, dagger, and sword are yet in the clutch

of broken and bejewelled fingers, but the looking-glass has fallen from the grasp of the goddess.

To give you a minute description of the many figures and groups which decorate the side walls of the great cave would, I feel sure, weary you. Most noticeable amongst their number is the giant Arddhánārishwara, an impersonification of the male, or active, and female, or passive, elements in nature. The right side of the body is that of a man, the left side that of a woman, with but one breast and an exaggerated thigh. The curled hair on the right is adorned with the snake, and on the left with a woman's head-gear; the masculine arms wield the sceptre, the feminine arms hold the mirror. There, too, is Shiva, executing a fierce war dance to the accompaniment of Bhiringe's tabor, and overlooked by a hideous afreet perched on a rock. Parvati is being married to her heavenly spouse, and she occupies a position on her bridegroom's right, which Hindoo women still do on the day of marriage, and only then. Brahma sits complacently on the lotus leaf, Mahadeo voyages on the bull, Garuda soars aloft on the eagle. Decorated with snakes curled into the shape of bracelets and necklets, her hair one mass of writhing vipers, a girdle of skulls over her bosom, strange Durga leers down at you. Every inch of the rock is covered with sculpture of the drollest and the uncanniest kind imaginable. Now a little dwarf, with a turtle pendant over his chest, attracts the attention, and the

moment after the eyes catch sight of two attendants fanning a deity with a Royal fly-flap. The soft hips of handmaidens are carved with the dressing-cases of their Olympian mistresses, and amidst clouds, above the major-domos, galaxies of singing girls distend their cheeks. The briarian-armed and many-headed hosts put one in mind of the tentacles of some monstrous octopus suddenly petrified on a stony slab, and the feeling of calm and repose which proximity to sculpture usually produces is varied here by passing emotions not altogether unmixed with an astonished fear.

The central and triune-headed deity is some nineteen feet high, very beautiful, and finely preserved. Formerly considered as representing the Hindoo Trinity, later opinion regards it as representing the Mahratta Mahadeo. Three faces of very large size gaze out of stony and uncut eyes, a slight moustache lines the lip of the first head, the central face is pleasing and placid, the third excessively gentle and refined. The three heads spring from one ample neck, rising from a chest of such ample proportions that it would put to shame even that of Michael Angelo's David. In the deep gloom, standing in bold relief from the background of rock, the bust has an attractive aspect, and captivates one as a sculpture of Rameses or Semiramis charms one, delighting one with its exquisite softness and peculiar head-gear, as the colossal Buddhas that guard the extremities of the Japanese Empire.

Very dissimilar emotions are evoked by the many oratories and cells put up to the lingan or ithyphallic emblem of ancient Egypt and Greece. On circular altars of rock a stone rudely carved to resemble the male organ of generation is hollowed out on its summit to receive the offerings of oil and ghee. No Hindoo cave temple appears to be entirely free from an object so obscene in our western eyes, and its worship is so general throughout Hindoostan that ladies of high caste, down to their poorest sisters, wear a tiny effigy of it in cases of silver or wood, according to the extent of their means, tied around the neck. In shrines of greater sanctity than Elephanta it will be found adorned with garlands of flowers and painted in brilliant red, and on the Aryan tomb one frequently sees its image in stone. Worship may be offered to it by every individual of whatever caste, and prayers may be put up to it without the need of a priest. The religious rite consists in pouring water over images, swinging incense, and offering betel to the linga, and smearing the God of Wisdom, or some other figure, with vermilion, amidst much ringing of bells and singing of mantras. Red powder, emblematical of generative force, still clings to a few figures of this old cave, but Garipuri has too little renown to be often visited by the decoratively inclined pilgrim.

That mysteries as unholy as those of Eleusis may have been celebrated here is not impro-

bable. Maybe in the deep dead of night barren women prostituted themselves to the reverend eremites, the sexes intermingled in frenzied play, the cave echoed with Pandemonic din that soared out oceanwise, borne on the breeze. Around the Phallus, brilliant with vermillion, garlanded with sweet flowers, holding each other's hands, a living chain may have been formed as caprid as any that ever danced in the groves of Babylon. Sellers of incense crowded the gates, bands of fierce ascetics moved down the hill sides, flags and silk canopies decked the chapel and the oratory, and variegated streamers floated from the god's car. Through the gloom, illuminated by flaring torches, sailors passing around the isle might then have seen the tambourine whirled at the tip of an arm, and caught glimpses of swart faces suddenly peering out of the dusk, whilst the glitter of bracelets, like fireflies on a sombre night, corruscated and sparkled on jewelled tissues. Moving discs of flame, like clots of blood, glared on the roof, and the deities, waking out of their stony sleep, gesticulated with their manifold hands as the snake in involuted folds crept from the skull. Under the tamarind tree the blue, yellow, and white veils of the dancing girls floated over the sward as they delicately tripped it to the sound of rebeck and drum. Others, reclining under the peepul, with their chin resting on the open hand, motionless as sphinxes, darted their great black eyes on the

ascending troop of votaries. Great was the trampling of echoing feet, vast the clamour of cymbal and bell as the worshippers with one accord called the great earth-mother from the abyss. Dishevelled, their robes torn, their wreaths unthreaded, the multitude plunged into orgies at which Greece would have stood back appalled. Scenes, viler and more unnatural, were no doubt enacted than those so horribly depicted at Ambernath, and Sodom and Gomorrah were outrivalled.

The little dust I had stirred, the voluptuous stillness and serenity of the atmosphere, these caves with their old spell of evil still upon them, the train of ideas foreign to other situations, made it not altogether good I should longer remain seated out there. The sun had already sunk, and I strolled out before the libidinous gods, ere their vile histories and darker worship had sickened me for God's pure air. A sigh of relief, as intense as mine, must have been breathed by the great Florentine when he left the gates of the Inferno behind him.

LETTER VI.

THE APOLLO BUNDER.

WEDNESDAY, 6TH JUNE, 1883.

BOMBAY.

I AM writing to you from the Apollo Bunder, the resort to-night of the European and Oriental fashionable world. Here the exquisites, beaux, and dandies of two civilizations have already congregated. British belles are lounging over the sides of their victorias to chatter to their husbands or inamoratos, whilst the rich Parsee lady, clad in silken garments, reclines in the back of her carriage as she takes a sly peep at the accursed white race through the wooden lattices of her closed vehicle. With tremendous *éclat* a few jovial trios of sportive Mahommedans still dash past in swaying dog-carts to draw up by the edge of the quay just in time to prevent the immersion of man and horse in the harbour's

flood. But most of the native footmen have already alighted from their seats, whilst the coachmen, solemn as the Olympians, and erect on their boxes, hold their whips aloft.

The night is dark and sultry, but the air is soft as silk. In the harbour a thousand twinkling lights are palpitating which almost bid fair to outrival the brilliancy of the stars which three hours hence will glow in the heavens above. These lights are white or green, of all sizes, shades, and hues, rocking either from the bows, masts, or sterns of steamers, troopships, or coasting vessels, and dancing up and down with every oscillation of the tide. I can catch but faint glimpses of clumsy wooden boats painted white and blue, with triangular brown sails moving about the smooth green waters, and so very picturesque in this soft dim light. But I distinctly discern a group of pilgrims, who having just landed from a buggalow that has been to Mecca, are still squabbling on the landing stairs. Very tall, swarthy, and patriarchal are these Asiatic men, their women are jealously veiled in long black woollen mantles shot with all the colours of the African loom, their children are mostly miserably and thinly clad.

But the regimental band now begins to play, the hum of conversation slightly ceases, although the clanking of harness continues loud as ever. The motley crowd fall into a languid swinging step, and along the stone rampart that circles

the quay Parsees and Hindoos sit. Before them British children romp and gambol as petulantly as if in cooler climes, but the tiny native tots, clothed in silk and gold, stumble by the ayah's side, as sedate and grave as Privy Councillors. In a country where to have offspring is regarded as the richest boon the gods have it in their power to bestow, is it to be wondered at that the native father should be seen, as he is to-night, seated in his trap surrounded by a host of little black faces with glistening teeth and bright black eyes.

And not the least amusing sight is the peculiarly endearing way in which many of the Hindoos stroll together. Group after group of men of mature years pass me by with their arms lovingly thrown around each other's necks, or sauntering hand in hand, most lovesick looking. If they are not related they most probably are bargaining each to outdo the other. But the splendour of their gilded turban, the magnificence of their yellow, mauve, or purple mantles, the spotless white of tunic and cummerbund, the extraordinary grace of the eastern salaam when made by high-bred hands, more than atones for the duplicity of their mobile features. A natural eloquence, a peculiar grace of action often seems to forestall what they are about to deliver. I prefer them a hundred times to yonder silly, roys-tering Parsee, who, aping our western manners, struts about with dandy cane, beating his thin

white shoes, and making so curt a bow as he raises his fingers to his cap of two folds, in shape like a bishop's mitre.

Nearly all the native women to be seen on foot are of the lowest castes. Unless they be ayahs disfigured by the adoption of the long Christian petticoat and trammelled with voluminous muslins they wear the yielding country dress. Every slender limb is then instinct with wonderful lithe grace, the gait so artful and elastic, yet so natural, no haste, no unseemly hurry. Some are returning homewards, carrying their naked children astraddle upon the hip; others bearing bright brass pitchers upon the head, go to and fro. Bracelets of gold, silver, shell, and glass encircle wrist and elbow, bangles tinkle upon the feet, the nose-ring hangs awry over the sensual lips. The shell-wristlet tells you yonder Hindoo girl is married, and the absence of paint from the forehead of this poor lass proclaims her widowhood.

The only other members of the fair sex visible are our countrywomen chattering and laughing, and no doubt shocking the daughters of India as much by the barefaced coquetry of their present public promenade as they did last night by their low bodices and by "their impudence" in walking arm in arm with their own husbands at His Excellency's reception. Native ladies forget to veil their own faces, little girls leave off their play to see such a sight of indecency as is now

presented to them by an English lady quietly walking with four or five gentlemen. Here we have the latest productions of Parisian millinery art, and although we scarce have reached June, white feathers, summer costumes, and dust cloaks have long been the fashion. The climate has left but very little natural colour in these English cheeks, and the ashen pallor, when not remedied by rouge, is painfully noticeable. But I have heard that the roses our Saxon daughters bring out on their cheeks are considered rather vulgar, and to be toned down as soon as possible. The contempt which—it is a law of nature—the members of a conquering race should entertain for the subject population over which they rule is finely exemplified in the curl of the lip and disdain with which our Bombay belles regard their lowly dark sisters. And what a contrast to these bowing and scraping Europeans so anxious to meet with recognition from their countrywomen is yonder Hindoo who so stolidly saunters some four paces ahead of his wife elect and auxiliary wives, holding the fair sex in such utter disregard. Every woman is to him, no doubt, but an instrument of pleasure, void of the feelings of honour, vacant in mind and unsteady as “the peepul buds that float in air.” And so thinks the Chief of Ram Nuggur, who with arms covered with bracelets from the wrist to the elbow, surveys the “English harem” through a quizzing

glass, whilst his Prime Minister plays with a mastiff called "Poos."

The carriages are thickly grouped, the footmen either hold the horses' heads or chat in squatting clusters of two and threes, and English children run in and out between them and the many wheels. These obstacles would quite suffice to overturn the clumsy European, but the native steers his course around them all with surprising dexterity and ease. His nervous fear of hoofs keeps him from close proximity to any beast, and the dread of pollution from contact with the white makes him often yield to the smallest babe a very respectful berth. It is, indeed, true that a Parsee may now and then be seen shaking an influential English official's hand, but here the vanity of wishing to appear well with his rulers overrides the reticence and prejudices of Zoraster's followers.

And so for one hour longer the native infantry band will continue to discourse most painful music from the top storey of the brilliantly-lighted refreshment room, shaped for all the world like an English railway station. Very inharmoniously the poor fellows play, perpetually either lapsing into the frenetic beat of the nautch, or rushing into the impassioned drum tattoo that heralds the wedding procession. With ears attuned to the shrill pipes and the clash of cymbals, they are ever in a chronic state of confusion over Weber's runs

and Gungl's musical fioritura. Yet they play unusually quietly to-night, for no rival musicians call upon them to drown other strains by the riotousness of their own.

And for one hour more, like coloured threads in a dark loom, all these costumes will continue to move up and down. At length as dinner-time arrives the crowd will quickly lessen. As eight bells strikes from the many ships moored out at sea the last departures will take place amidst much rumbling of wheels. A few boatmen will then appear and lay down their sleeping mats upon the quay. Peaceably these fellows slumber in the open air, their wives and children beside them, all covered by one and the self-same sheet. On one side of them they have the lullaby of the breaking wave, the rhythmic lapping of the tide, on the other the twinkling lights of the third largest city of our Queen's Empire.

LETTER VII.

AN INDIAN MASHER.

THURSDAY, 7TH JUNE, 1883.

BOMBAY.

IN my last letter I alluded to European and native swells. To the latter class belongs Nana Nilajee Rao, eldest son of an Indian Statesman, and at present resident in Bombay, where I often see him. From an Englishman lately in the service of the Nizam, I have received an account of this young Oriental d'Orsay's education and way of life. Of what I heard and daily see I send you note, thinking it may amuse you.

The Rao Sahib is excessively womanish and effete, no down lines his cheeks or his lips, and his hips are enormous. As delicate as any features ever moulded by nature for a pretty woman's are his effeminate ones, and they are constantly embellished by the most languid of

smiles. His mouth is as small, his figure as slender, his hair as soft and as silky as a temple dancer's, and the hale country lass that scornfully passes him by might envy his soft, deep eye, large as a gentle gazelle's, and might covet his long, thin, and treacherous hands. His endeavours to ape the manners of his own sex are not less ridiculous than those of some fast native imitating John Bull, so ineradicable is the notion of femininity from his usual demeanour. He shrinks from the company of his fellows, their potations of raki and toddy shock him, their oaths blast his hypercritical ears, and their coarse innuendoes pain his susceptible heart. He is the victim of sensibility, and troubled with nerves, and has all the gentle sex's craving for embroideries, gaudy veils, tittle-tattle, and sweets. All the little minutiae of his zenana are matters of paramount importance to him, for he lacks that virility which can look at these trifles contemptuously if not quite indifferently. His brain at its very best soon tires, and, like most of the daughters of Eve, he can never manage to comprehend any abstract statement or truth. His mind is ever held in a trembling balance; ever and anon a faint impulse of preference inclines it to one extreme or the other. Green blushes mantle over his smooth cheeks as readily as over those of a dusky virgin, and his gait and attitudes resemble hers as also do his capacities. His inveterate timidity destroys his utterance of thought, and oftentimes suspends his powers of

reflection, and in society or at the Durbar he is always a *bouche inutile*, or a burden to the company. Weak as water gruel, debile and sinewless, there is nothing in him to awaken like or dislike or to call forth admiration, unless it be his incredibly fine sensitiveness to perfume and dress. I can liken him to nothing better than to a marble Bathyllus or bronze Antinous, such as are seen in our museums and art galleries. A pretty actress playing Sacountala might not inaptly typify him. An Andalusian brunette is not more soft, more languishing, and he seems to have been born to wear the tortoise-shell comb and the mantilla.

Nor must it be forgotten that this physical and moral effeminacy has been considerably augmented by the early years he has spent in a princely zenana; for he was born whilst his father was yet Prime Minister of a native Court, and his Hindoo mother was only too proud to deposit him as a pledge of her husband's fidelity to the common master, and to hand him over to the ladies of the Royal Palace. Though virtually a slave, he was, of course, treated more benignly than other children held as hostages, or purchased from their parents either on account of physical beauty or for some peculiar talent which they possess, of singing, story-telling, or shampooing, usually are, and had even more than enough of rose water areca and betel. Knowing little to teach him the legitimate spouses, in-

numerable concubines and tire women occupied part of his time in cleaning his teeth, in instructing him how to walk gracefully, or cook rice and curry, but most of his leisure was spent in useless chit-chat, in listening to the bargains struck with the tailor or itinerant pedlar, or wasted in sleep. Petty pursuits and mean occupations were allowed to engross his childish attention; beyond these his intellect never penetrated, above these his heart never soared. Indeed any indication of weariness in the mechanical concerns of the household, in the settling of disputes between rival offspring, in scandal-mongering with the lady superior or professional male match-makers, in the betrothal of sons and of daughters at an early age, or in the strict observance of caste superstitions and rites would have been promptly punished with death in a pit filled with milk, or by destruction under the hoofs of wild cattle. Nor was indulgence in any healthy infantile romp possible to a poor child always dressed in transparent silk robes, tinsels, muslins, and gold to catch the eyes of the Sovereign when he raised his own purdah, or garlanded and bejewelled to elicit remarks as to the appropriateness or improvement of the costume from the female relatives occasionally asked to a doll feast or temple excursion. Day after day did he spend in a dark room that his complexion might be improved, and he was fattened and whitened by medicine and peculiar diet just as if he had been a Georgian girl got up

for sale. Verily such was the care taken lest active pursuits might impair the Prince's right in his beauty that his feet were but seldom permitted to touch the bare earth, the palkee or painted palanquin being ever at hand to convey him, the elephant's howdah ever at his ayah's disposal. Otherwise nurtured than the Ruler's sons, more delicately perfumed and fed, when he would have challenged them to bend youth's small bow, or to wield the tulwar, they would mockingly lead him back to the female slaves' apartments, there to learn in his little bright dress to steady the "lota" or bowl upon his flower-crowned head. Excluded from all male society he was thus degraded to a pitch of listlessness, mawkish sentimentality, and sensual mysticism which outrivalled the supineness of his only playfellows, the Ranees expectant. With them he enjoyed the privilege of the embroidered umbrella, the fans of peacock feathers, the chourie made of the wild cow from Thibet, with long flowing hair and a handle of gold studded with jewels. Kettledrums sounded before him as he was borne in procession, and girls with strong spells for the conquest of men and sweet with the odour of musk fanned him with scarves of azure that shed a flood of radiance around. But what mattered it to him that he was treated in consonance to the dictates of Eastern hospitality, to the rules of the Vedas, the injunctions of the Shastras, and the sanction of custom. This may have caused the Brahmins much inward rejoicing,

but to him it was provocative of endless restraint, occasioned him many a dismal ride in the hooded carriage of the Court ladies, and kept him in that state of total ignorance which is considered so ornamental to the Hindoo lady. So at the age of puberty, when his adolescence and his father's swift declension in the Prince's favour alike rendered his longer residence in the palace an impossibility he had already been deeply inoculated with the vacillation and intellectual apathy of the high caste beauty, and had not escaped the contagion of the cruel and impure characteristics of his wicked attendants. He was, indeed, totally devoid of that training which should have implanted in him some germs of manly demeanour, and he completely lacked the instruction so necessary to further the development of both body and mind.

But although so very pitifully endowed in a moral and physical point of view, Nana nevertheless leads the Hindoo fashions in Bombay. His verdict on the number of folds required for the true dandy's turban, his judgment on the quality and quantity of the jewelry it is becoming for a Hindoo beau to wear around his wrists, his neck, or his ears, are not to be appealed against. He sets the cut of the white tunic for summer wear, the length of the sandal or pointed shoes, and decrees the pleats to be formed in the muslin scarf thrown over the shoulders by men. Compare him with our European exquisites and you will find

him not much less foolish than they are, although infinitely more cruel and sly. He has his manservant whipped, when this unfortunate mortal fails to dress him carefully, with the same ferocity with which he orders his wives to be caned when they omit to bear him male issue. In this country he has an advantage over his white countertype, for his actions are irresponsible, his vindictiveness enormous, and his domestics abjectly servile to his wishes. They are ever ready to render his large languishing eyes still more captivating by pencilling lines of black on the edges of the eyelid, to dye them with kohl, or enlarge the pupils with antimony. His eyebrows are carefully tended and nurtured that no stray hair may break the regularity of the beautiful semicircular curve, and after shampooing and other luxuries so much indulged in by the Oriental sensualist, he is perfumed with attar of roses from the richest Persian rosaries. His servant pays more attention to the folding of his turban than Beau Brummel ever did to his cravat, and when he writes 'tis on paper spotted with silver and sprinkled with gold. With the effeminate articulation of the native he lisps hyperbolical compliments, twaddles a jargon of affectation and sentimentality, poses nice questions of punctilio, and carries outward manners and etiquette to the greatest extent of ceremonial refinement. He simpers to make his mouth look beautifully small, rolls his eyes to make them look large, and his shoulders and head seem set upon

springs. His wives have names expressive of their personal charms—Coral Lips, Choice of My Heart, and a dozen similar fancies distinguish the ladies of his zenana. They deck him with their anklets and earrings like a dancing girl, they trick him out with incarnadine silks and satins like an Indian bride, and make him play at the dolls' feast.

The greatest pleasure he knows is to be swung in a silken swing by his women; his greatest amusements are to see kites flying or fights between quail, trained rams, and antelopes. Encounters between larger game frighten him to the verge of madness, and he never yet has been able to witness elephant struggling with elephant, or tiger engaged with a rhinoceros, without fainting straightway. His keenest excitement consists in the tame dancing of the nautch girls, or in watching the mimic action of waxen fantoccini. For the menageries of up-country Rajahs he has the greatest aversion, and he could never yet be induced to hunt with any more offensive weapon than a blow-pipe. When on a sporting tour his game is shot by his servants to make him a good bag, and one of his women dressed as an Amazon applies the vinaigrette to his nostrils at the sound of firearms. His equipage is glorious with silken cushions and silver appointments, and his liveries are of purple and bullion. His horses are of the milkiest white, their manes are plaited with ribbons, the fly cloths are lace. His bed resembles the cot decorated with Valenciennes silk and

pompons our great ducal houses prepare for their firstborn. 'Tis said his private apartments are painted with figures and scenes, but of doubtful moral character. He has an English tutor, Brahmin guardians, but his barber is his prime favourite and counsellor. The musician, the dancer, the easy husband, the venal father are his bosom friends. They comply with the frivolities of their host, and with Oriental duplicity enter into his humours as if with their whole hearts. Astrologers select the lucky minutes when anything like business can be transacted. His phlegmatic and silly disposition, his arrant coxcomby, his infatuation for quality ways makes him a mere plaything in the hands of designing fools. He is a stranger to magnanimity, generosity, and all the noble virtues which constitute a good man. Alas, poor Nana !

LETTER VIII.

KOLABA.

FRIDAY, 8TH JUNE, 1888.

BOMBAY.

I AM not as averse to the mention of death, nor so disinclined to strolls in cemeteries as most Anglo-Indians. Were I to die here I know very well that my name would scarce live for one short-half-hour on the lips of fashionable inconsideration. That my memory should be as short-lived as a Moslem's for his father, or for his wife, causes me but little aggravation. Death is so sudden here, burial so soon follows it, that it seems quite natural to be shuffled away and quickly forgotten. Yet if it pleases Providence, I would fain be carried to the grave in a more decorous procession than that which, with its laughter and careless behaviour, startles and shocks the native at our want of heart.

And these thoughts come to me with redoubled emphasis as I stand in this old burial ground of

Kolaba. Tombs of marble, headstones of richly-polished granite, or lowly wooden crosses tell of many a seafaring man who sleeps his last sleep under this rank vegetation. Other morns than ours have dawned upon them, poor pilgrims ! who finished the journey of life at a place where they were only intended to halt. The ocean billows meet on each side of the spur of land, the black reefs of rock at low tide shimmer in the intense heat, the sea-bird has built her nest on many a pillar. Rich tropical foliage transforms the ossuary into a verdant garden, and the bushes that line the gravel paths are waving in rich flaming colours, with ineffable sadness. The epitaphs are pithy, the texts few, for there seems to have been a general consensus of opinion that the death of our countrymen in a strange land is sufficiently angust and touching without the mawkish appeal to the passing viator. Naked gardeners, with but a cloth round the loins, are watering flowers, possibly long ago planted by loving hands ; but as the place has long since been disused, we find no open graves made prospectively ready to receive anyone who may die so suddenly that there will be no time to dig his tomb. On many a monument may be read the tale of a family struck down with cholera during one day, and dysentery at a few hours' notice appears to have sent many a spirit before the Judgment Seat to receive its last and great award. How many young wives have been laid low after scarce a twelve-

months' residence here ; what multitudes of children have passed away as a dream and are not. Far out to sea the new lighthouse stands in a circle of foam ; lizards prance out of the crannies of the sea wall, and as I pass out from this Golgotha a cobra, that emblem of immortality, curls round the shaft of a column that is broken. Behind me I leave a peace and a stillness resembling that of one unbroken Sabbath.

Near the cemetery a few fishermen are mending their nets under the old lighthouse, now inhabited by owls, bats, and other birds of desolation. In a pretty quarry overgrown with flowering thorn, and bushy with wild flowers, a goat plaintively bleats as it pulls at its tether. Its horns are painted all red, its hoofs white, and Mussulman children have fantastically decorated its neck with blue beads. As I stroll inland banyan trees overshadow each side of the path, shooting down their pensile roots from the manifold branches, each of them in itself a grove. Huge cubicular-trunked trees are waving their satin leaves, with undersides which look like quivering silver. Perhaps the bungalows here are more picturesque than in any other part of Bombay. Often overgrown with beautiful creepers, the compound crowded with waving plaintains and beds of the richest floral vegetation, they seem a fit abode for the Indian goddess, Flora. The white frontages and the verandahs look so excessively pretty when seen through a mass of greenery, and the yellow walls picked out with ochre, have the gayest ap-

pearance. Women are busily gathering up the dead leaves and accumulated masses of rubbish.

The military quarters assigned to English regiments stationed in the island are quite close to these pretty residences. On a grassy flat the private has his curiously roofed bungalows and most comfortable lodging. Neat and clean, beautifully housed, he seems an enviable being. Either swinging at the ends of ropes fastened under his thatched verandah, or revolving around a cross-beam, he may now be seen taking what indoor exercise he possibly can. Smoking, drinking, and chatter while away the morning and afternoon hours, and his existence is kept from utter stagnation by the early parade, or an occasional evening debauch. But English maidservants are too scanty here to permit him to indulge in those flirtations so delicious and so prolific of accidents at home. He no doubt sadly misses the absence of Sarah Jane, so sweet to clasp round the waist in a London park, who treated him with her wages as each Sabbath came round. The native woman understands nothing of English flirtation, the preliminaries to love resemble a bargain throughout the East, and the sombre fair lose half their charms by their mercenary dispositions. In Oriental amours the heart has little share in the tender passion. Asiatic love, devoid of sentiment, means only rampant sensuality and the elegant refinements and chaste endearments of Mary Anne, or Jemima are unknown. Instead,

therefore, of accompanying the charmer on a river excursion, tripping with her at some musical *soirée*, or indulging in a cheap seat at a theatre after devouring the contents of her mistress's pantry, he has here to be contented with a sober walk with a brother comrade, an occasional visit to his Institution, or a game in the racquet court. If he is married and has children, they are taught their lessons at the neighbouring military school; his wife is usually attended by both ayah and bearer like a *grande dame*, the baby is often a bright little mortal. The dress of the matrons of the cantonment is rather extravagant and showy with all the colours of the rainbow on Sundays, but brown Holland is worn on weekdays. Their lives, poor things, are somewhat wearisome, they scarce know how to pass the long hours of the hot days, but the consequence they derive from their many attendants, their occasional holiday drive in the hired victoria, no doubt alleviate these discomforts. Being the most vigilant of mistresses they are probably better waited on than anyone else in Bombay; the indolent sweeper finds no escape from their piercing eyes, and the hamal is seldom found asleep in their precincts. I shall never forget being present when a native nurse was receiving lessons in English nattiness from a sergeant's wife, and how soon the creature was browbeaten into instant obedience. Shaggy black oxen with curved horns, now graze along the roadside, quite

oblivious to the firing going on at the butts placed out at sea. The natives trot by very sheepishly, for the fear of the redcoat, his stalwart frame, his rough words, and calm but audacious swagger, is very potent with the aborigine.

Overgrown with flowers, nestled in green, overlooking a pretty encampment of spotless white tents, the military mess is surrounded with rows of long Indian chairs. Here the officers are whiling away the sultry hours, drinking iced pegs and recording the last gossip or the newest sporting anecdote. In defiance of Pythagorean systems and Brahminical tenets, many of them have waged a perpetual war throughout all the provinces of India with the animal world, and they now find it hard to be quartered at a spot so devoid of game as this island. They console themselves, however, by fighting their battles over again, and their talk is all of elephants crashing through underwood or of moonlight nights spent in the topmost boughs of a tree with a case of cigars and a good rifle listening to the bleating of the goat tied to the trunk and watching for a man-eating tiger. In these exciting quarries they have acquired the untiring physical energy, the calmness in danger, the quick eye for an advantageous position, and the readiness to benefit by the errors of the enemy which has made them supreme on Asiatic battle-fields. From the enclosure comes the click of the billiard ball, the sing-song of the marker,

and peals of occasional laughter. A saddled horse awaits under the portico, writers pass in and out over the threshold, with portfolios of copied orders, a few orderlies bustle about. A tabooed lieutenant strolls in the gravel paths, a rich yellow flower between his teeth, and encourages his dog, who is a very sleuth hound, in the pursuit of the garden mice. At night how many a good story passes around the hospitable regimental board one can just catch a glimpse of. What tales of shekarry and sport have those plain white-washed walls heard? What anecdotes of wounded boars brought to bay, of cheetahs, bleeding at the mouth, traced by their blood to their lairs. How many prayers have been uplifted for another mutiny that would ensure promotion, and afford an opportunity of looting the Rajah of his jewels, the Nawab of his baubles, a Hindoo temple of its gems and gold deities? What visions of fat bullocks, crammed with plunder, driving past the guard at the gate, and struggling Hindoos compelled to yield up cloths of brocade and silver tissues at the bayonet's point! Each threatened advent of Russia over our northern frontier is anxiously looked for, and to many subalterns desirous of advancement there could be no pleasanter news than that which would announce that through the defiles, down which all invaders of India have hitherto advanced, the double-headed eagle of the Czar is likewise making her way. Threats

of fining for betting at table form a nightly amusement, and the heroes of Afghanistan prove themselves as jolly in their cups as the buoyant griffins. Memorials, petitions and complaints to and against the Adjutant-General and Paymaster-General are then all put aside, and it seems to be almost forgotten that the service is fast going to the devil. There present are the champions of our insular race-course at Mahaluxmee, who have several times beaten the fleetest steeds of the Arabian horse-dealer. Triumphant they have frequently ridden past the dense crowd of native spectators in the most variegated costume like one huge flower bed, to draw up by the winning post just in front of the grand stand, where Englishwomen, in the newest lace bonnets and richest dresses, have applauded them ere they went to the scales. They are all well up in the dodges of the Parsee bookmaker, are expert in defeating the schemes of the Moslem dealer, and possess a thorough knowledge of every racing stud on this side of India. They will impart to you the pedigree of every animal in the stables of the sportive Rajah, and initiate you into the genealogy of the Government breeding stallions. Several of them have held political appointments, and curious are the stories they tell of princely life in the East. The eyes of this bluff major have often rested on the fat, dowdy, dancing girls of Hyderabad, and this ancient colonel has witnessed the countless displays of fireworks of which

native potentates are so dotingly fond. Yonder beardless boy has out-tipped the bibacious Amir of Kwôt, and this juvenile in tight trousers and Wellingtons—a jockey incarnate—has slain his “three niggers” on the inglorious plains of Maiwand.

Smoking, stolid as at home, but hot and dressed in karkee, the corporals, sergeants, and other non-commissioned officers are reclining at ease under the shade of the massive trees. Here the last court martial is talked over for the one thousandth time, the chances of promotion are put to the toss, and incredible stories are told by camp annalists of the dark days of Cawnpore. The sunbeams quiver on the scanty grass, the soft breeze rustles the leaves, the earth gives forth a sweet scent that comes after dew. Occasional openings in the foliage of the recumbent boughs permit one to catch glimpses of the mirror-like surface of the sea and the light fleecy clouds changing to roseate hues on a sky of the intensest blue. A shower of gold seems falling in the far west, and long scarves of vapour float around the distant islands. Native women, not veiled in transparent clouds of muslin but closely wrapped up in striped cotton cloths, so that not even the tip of a nose can be seen, glide by as noiselessly as spectres, but their children peep curiously at the military sahibs. Plentiful supplies of good Saxon beer from the canteen keep up the glow of the long-winded yarn, and our martial *prestige* and *esprit de corps* are sus-

tained by retrospects of hair-breadth escapes at Herat and Cabul.

And right is it that it should be so, for the very ground these soldiers talk on is overshadowed by the steeple of a memorial church erected to commemorate those who fell during our first Afghan campaign. Here stands the beautiful building which recalls to the historic mind unexampled scenes of Asiatic treachery, oaths broken, vows taken in vain, a hasty and heart-breaking retreat. Never yet have I walked in the echoing aisles under the lofty roof without very soon seeing visions of our defeated troops dying in the mountainous passes. In the Hallelujah that soared from the high altar I fancied I heard the steady tramp of our men returning to take a bitter revenge on the wild tribes of the hills; most unholy thoughts which have made this tabernacle for me, as the one at Cawnpore, an oratory of anger and blood, and called forth the bad passions that ever rankle between race and race. But I trust I may be singular in my fancies, and that in an age of rose-water policy I may shortly attain to that charity which treats the murderers of our countrymen as bosom friends. If dedicated stone and sacred marble must be erected to soothe national asperities, I would, however, prefer it should be in something after the style of Framjee Nusserwanjee's dhurrumsala, than in memorial churches and commemorative crosses. As far as I know, the Moslems have built no edifice to cele-

brate their defeats, but have raised many to record their victories. With people so easily impressed as the Hindoos, this example seems worthy to me to be followed.

In this Parsee convalescent home, misalled a dhurrumsala or rest-house by the natives, the donor's name is ostentatiously painted on every pillar of the one-storied range of buildings. Divided into many rooms the sickly find a ready succour; women are even now talking as they loll on the green benches, pretty children play in a garden decorated with a queer white and blue tower. Planted with the palm, mango, and tamarind, a better kind of resort for the invalid could not be imagined, everything seems decent and clean, and would be quite an example for our authorities at home to force on casual wards in our workhouses. One out of a hundred native charitable institutions in Bombay, it reminds one how extensive is the native's liberality towards men of his caste, and wealth, if often unscrupulously acquired, seldom fails to find a noble channel for distribution here. The place has nothing squalid about it, the flowers are sweet, the gravel paths tidy, the inmates cheerful, and the admirable administrative talents of the Zoroastrian are evidenced by all one looks on.

On payment of a very small fee invalid Parsees from all parts of India are allowed to come here for change of air and of scene. I find several

denizens of Broach, Surat, and Bulsar, but far the greater number are inhabitants of Bombay. Very pleasant it is to see how numerous are the friends who have found their way here to cheer the sickly. The patients forget the pangs of malaria and of fever in animated gossip, in the chatter of old cronies, in hearty salaams. The pale women brighten up at the many offerings the tender relatives bring them from their own private stores or the native bazaars. Here a group of silken clad women are lovingly urging a convalescent girl to take tiny strolls under the piazzas, and quite in the distance little creatures are playing with toys before a line of sickly but garrulous men. Little gifts of cloth, of clarified butter, of rice, come out of many a basket, the domestics of the rich have brought wonderful puddings of meal besprinkled with spices; a little lass, wild with delight, skirmishes about with a new pair of slippers and English open-worked stockings her grandam has brought for bright-eyed mamma. In the long ranges of rooms one catches a glimpse of many a patient propped up in bed enjoying the plenteous diet provided by the kind visitors.

Quite near at hand, in a grassy retreat under a cluster of plaintains, I notice a few Hindoo huts, the residence of the poor. The roofs of bamboo are neatly thatched, the eaves project, and under them busy wives grind curry stuff in the stone mortars. Thud! thud! merrily goes the pestle, and a heap of chaff flying out on the wind is

prettily chased by a couple of tottering urchins. On a raised erection, tables laden with sweets, bunches of fruits, and coloured liquids tell me I gaze at Kolaba bazaar, and the stout matting fastened to the cowsheds from roof to floor speaks of an approaching monsoon. A few fowls daintily pick their way over the road, juveniles are playing the native hop-skotch, and their elders—fully grown men—a species of prisoners' base. As the heat of the players increases scanty wraps are thrown off; naked as the ancient Lacedaemonians in the palaestra they gambol within a circle formed by laughing women and girls far too modest to join in the sport, but eager to applaud a little conqueror or to chaff the fallen or captive. Slenderly built, either emaciated by hunger or abdominally distended by rice and vegetable diet, few of the masculine forms are sculpturesque, and in vain would the artist seek here—as indeed in all Hindostan—for the thews and sinews of the athletic gladiator of Rome. Nevertheless, the peculiar elegance of feature, the often feminine build, the graceful carriage of head and neck, might perhaps recall to his mind the Grecian éphèbe. The innocence, the entire absence of anything approaching natural turbulence, the charming childishness of the people when thus engaged in village games is so captivating that one finds it hard to believe the tales narrated of the depravity of their saturnalias at festive seasons in holy fane.

I regret having to leave this pretty scene for the long rows of wharves where endless bales of cotton await early shipment. Still even these localities are picturesque with their brightly clad and toiling women, the yellow capped police mounting guard at the gates, the tinkling sound of the bullock bells. On the summit of the low walls, cross-legged, like monkeys, coolies quietly chew betel and pan; their giddy, naked progeny playing about; their wives quietly resting in the distance with laughing urchins on the knee. Very amusing is it to see several tiny rascals now engaged at hide-and-seek behind a huge pile of newly-landed coal, and dodging in and out of the acres covered by cotton goods. From the railway station streams of passengers are wending home, bullocks are grazing near empty carts by the side of the road. The factories begin to disgorge their contingents of operatives, nose-ringed girls, boys adorned with the bracelet, women in bright-coloured cloths, and amidst the living swarm I find it hard to manœuvre my way.

The green where cotton is daily bought and sold is perfectly deserted and silent. Early here in the morning the busy agents weigh the loose bales, and much chaffer takes place, for the Hindoo delights to protract a bargain to a preposterous length. The gesticulating throng of merchants who so love to squat in chattering groups in the circle of their own shadows have all long since cleared away, leaving behind them

little balls of fluffy down sailing on the light breeze. The shades of tropical night are fast obscuring the outlines of the populous warehouses, the tops of the palms, the shaded wells, towards which women crowned with pots of burnished brass are gracefully wending. A little dark crowd now comes along on the dusty road: three boys trot in front, three hooded women are loudly vociferating.

Unshackled, but making no attempt to escape, a female prisoner walks docilely between two swarthy policemen. Her hood is torn, her gown bedraggled, though it still retains all the brilliancy of an Algerine scarf. Through her coarse lips the red juice of betel is trickling all over her hirsute chin. When she raises her eyes one can easily see the orbs can flash flame, but at present they are dimmed with the fumes of blang. She shuffles along in loose red cloth trousers with the half idiotic grin of the inveterate toper of this exotic beverage. Her white hair is carelessly dyed with lampblack, the hollows and furrows of cheek and brow have been filled up by white paint and rouge; some clumsy attempts at disguise seem to have been made. The silver bracelet she wears on the arms marks her out as a Mahomedan's wife, and her stalwart proportions pronounce her to be an excellent beast of burden, and hard-working slave.

Behind her come three women, weeping Hindoo Niobes, choking with sobs, throwing their arms

wildly about. They call on the prisoner to give them back the child, who, decked out with jewels, they entrusted to her care some few days ago. Alternately imploring and threatening, they pray her to discover where she has hid "their loving joy." The poor hysterical mother, half crazy with grief, now stops the procession to fling herself at the criminal's feet, kisses them, begs to be shown to her boy. Anon, unless restrained, like a tigress shorn of her cubs, she would fling herself on the thief. Never yet have I seen so touching a sight, save at Pydownee some weeks ago, when after a dreadful accident at a cotton mill poor women hung over the corpses of their children in the open street moaning in awful ululation.

But the prisoner, placid as a Moslem assassin at the Sessions bar, attempts no reply to the frantic questions. The indifference and callousness of the followers of the Prophet is indeed extraordinary. A Mussulman will smile under the cat-o'-nine-tails, a Mussulman woman will hear her sentence to transportation without the least change of colour. Yet this prisoner must know her case is quite hopeless, for a third policeman in the rear brings the jewels dug from the floor of her hut and which she stole from the child she drowned in the harbour a few evenings ago. The strange procession turns down a byelane to the police-station, and I quicken my pace towards home.

LETTER IX.

THE ESPLANADE.

SATURDAY, 9TH JUNE, 1883.

BOMBAY.

EVERY European in the place is now putting up prayers for the commencement of the rains with something of the fervour of the priests of the Grove calling on Baal. Has the monsoon burst on the coast, what telegrams of the weather from Malabar, when shall we have our annual flood in Bombay seem the only objects of human enquiry. Meanwhile cloud upon cloud, black as Erebus, nigrid as the antre of Trophonius's cave are piled up over the city; most welcome signs, our earnest petitions will shortly be answered. Thunder, lightning, and torrents of rain will soon disperse the gay crowd of promenaders into barricaded verandahs and matted bungalows. The boisterous winds will toss women's raven locks with wanton freedom and lead to a

general rearrangement of silken sarrees. Innumerable crawling things will make their way over our tables and chairs, our walls will stream with moisture, our compounds become little lagoons. With abundant showers all nature will smile; plenty will fill the garner, and poverty itself become bearable, for there will be the certainty of food. But however pleasant I may find a cooler temperature, the barometer falling some ten degrees, I shall deeply regret my pleasant and normal stroll along a sea-shore so full of life, light, and colour as it invariably is during the hot season.

And perhaps it is owing to the universal consciousness that open air pleasures cannot last very much longer, that the crowded state of the Maidan is explainable to night. Certainly I have rarely seen the successive pieces of parched turf railed in with white-washed railings, or surrounded with dust laden trees, which stretch between the fort and the native town and abut on Back Bay, look more picturesque than they now do. The clouds have momentarily dispersed, the blue of the sky is visible, and the resplendence of a setting sun glows down upon the sea suffusing the waters with shimmering tracks of joyous light.

A score or more of civilians have pitched their tents on a strip of land facing Kolaba. Here they have raised a diminutive camp, have sociably passed the hot weather together, but will shortly be compelled to move off for shelter and dry accom-

modation to hotels, private rooms, or bungalows. The free kind of life engendered by sleeping under canvas will then have to be exchanged for the frigid punctiliousness of the drawing-room, and the youth who has passed most of the twenty-four hours in pyjamas and loose cashmere shirt, will have to don the morning coat, make the most scrupulous toilet, and appear as neat as a Dresden china figure. And probably it is with a view of making the most of the very few hours of liberty yet remaining to him that the tent dweller now so busily engages in tennis, in drinking iced pegs, and in swearing as he rides off to polo.

But far more picturesque than this nomadic horde are the many natives "now eating the air" along the road that runs nearest to the Back Bay. They have come here on foot or in shigrams, victorias, or buggies to suck in the cool atmosphere, for even the indigene is exhausted by the sultry heat. As they sit in their vehicles they look vastly complacent and smiling, not to say jocose. Many a brightly clad child is dandled by a delighted papa in turban or mitre. Dark women and delicate girls quietly chatter in their closed carriages drawn up by the edge of the sea to permit them to catch a breath of the tepid ether. A row of Parsee priests in white garments reading out of their liturgical books, squat on the rocky walls, whilst by the breaking waves the Zoroastrian, turned like a heliotrope to the sun, pays his symbolical adoration to the orb sinking down in

all the fulness of Oriental majesty. Mahommedans devoutly kneeling on the praying carpet turn towards Mecca, and bow down the head till it touches the soil, as with penitential striking of the breast they repeat the evening paternoster. Parsee ladies with their children stroll up and down, and long files of women, girls, and boys pass at a trot from the adjacent cotton weaving and spinning mills to the native town. Pretty little Sabeau lasses with forehead, nose and mouth softly shadowed with cream silk coloured hoods, peep shyly at me from their great luminous eyes, shining like lamps when the dark lashes are raised.

No regimental music plays to-night in the kiosk and enclosure called the bandstand, and the circle is quite overrun with children and ayahs. Within the white railings one indeed sees a lively scene; English boys and girls, pugnacious in spite of the heat, docile native tots soberly walking hand in hand. Here are black-eyed little girls gorgeously dressed in Chinese brocades, there timid boys full of quiet mirth. A Parsee papa hugs his little darling in his lanky arms and steals a sly kiss from the coral lips. A grave and bigoted Moslem is tenderly suiting his steps to the tottering gait of his little son, whom he is teaching to walk.

Indeed the native, like the Frenchman, is always thoroughly natural when with his children, and without the slightest symptom of shame, he fulfils all the functions of a zealous nurse. It is indeed beautiful to see these placid, grave-faced men,

keenly sensitive to ridicule, engaged in these feminine labours of love. No mistress was ever more solicitously wooed than are all these little babes by their proud progenitors. With infinite patience they attend to the little tot's wishes, sing at his bidding, satisfy his little curiosities, take him up, or put him down as he wishes. If the child cries, papa's face becomes wretched, if the child laughs, papa's visage however saturnine or morbidly hypochondriacal it may be, will break forth into smiles.

Nor is the mother one whit less affectionate, for assuredly if she is often her husband's domestic she is invariably her child's slave. Look at yonder poor drudge carrying that terribly heavy load on her head, how lovingly with her disengaged hand she draws towards her dark bosom the child that sits astride on her hip with his hands clutched around her neck. Peep under this dark mantle and see what a feast this nude infant with his body bulging with creases is taking from the maternal breast as "mammai" softly encourages him in his greediness. See how patiently this dainty Hindoo lady, dressed with meticulous care allows her babe to pile gravel and sand on her silken embroideries, and cheerfully resigns the jewels she calls her "dearest joys" to be relentlessly pulled from her tender ears. Possibly her sons, on account of the affection they cause her husband to show her, as well as owing to the glad assurances they give her that she will

never be superseded by another wife, may be dearer to her than her daughters, but if so no signs of preference appears in her kindly behaviour to her charming offspring, veritable love bonds of humanity. Sweet intercessors between race and race, they soften our feelings and appeal to our lenient charity.

How distressed looks this young mother, sitting quite close to me, who soothes her first-born in her loving arms as she sees an English nurse striking her charge, a thing a native woman no more than an ayah would ever do. As I pass I see the quietly jubilant mother "of many boys" sitting in her carriage with her back to the horses, having ungrudgingly resigned the best seat for her three little urchins, dressed—no doubt by her careful hands—in satins, damask and gold. With their beautifully flowing robes falling in almost classical folds, their ease of carriage, these infants pressed to their hearts, these mothers seem to me as if I were passing along a living gallery more lovely but somewhat resembling the pictured Virgin and Child the old masters have so sublimely drawn. Their mild, gentle and affectionate faces, the rich splendour of Oriental costume, make of each group a composition well worthy to match a *chef d'œuvre* of the Italian school! Good wives, doting mothers, ignorant of the world and the various temptations which the fair sex in Europe are liable to, their domestic and maternal duties engross their entire attention. No un-

married class exists to disturb their peace with its loves and broils, for bachelorhood is contemned in the East.

And these tiny objects of all this affection seem well to merit the love lavished on them. More docile, more winning children I think the world never saw, and one little wonders they are treated with such unequalled gentleness and indulgence, so easy does it seem to love them so much. One might perhaps wish them less sobriety of demeanour, more mischievous inclination, less gravity, but then all their actions and gestures are so instinct with grace that the artist at least would scarcely wish to exchange this solemn and beautiful taciturnity for the uncouthness of the British tom-boy. Strikingly effeminate as they mostly are it is scarce possible to distinguish the boy from the girl, long black hair streaming over the shoulders, or a little knot at the back of the head, or maybe a softer voice being the only criterions to distinguish the male from the female. This womanish look the boys preserve beyond puberty and even till late in life very occasionally. I have seen Parsees and Hindoos of fifteen apparelled in women's raiment and bets lost by knowing Europeans who took them for girls.

But as I turn my back on a people with whom family affection is so exceptionally strong, on many a woman who if on account of her sex is despised, is yet loved and respected as a gentle wife, on many a mother who if because of her

feminine birth is vowed by sages to subordination, submission and extinction after death is yet personally cherished by dutiful sons; I own that all is not so dark around the Asiatic hearth as missionaries would have us believe, and that here, perhaps more than elsewhere, holy and indissoluble affection reigns triumphant over the tyrannic and selfish dogmas and fabrications of ascetic and churlish men. Inasmuch as the squalor, the bickerings in our public streets at home between man and wife are not here present to give me a wholesome zest for my bachelorhood, and to confirm me in my single state, I must own I look on myself as scarcely less cursed than a Hindoo sinner threatened with transmigration after death into the body of a shrew or even worse. Disreputable of course I am in the eyes of Aryan society, for I am not married, or a householder, and though I often argue these essentials to Asiatic respectability are not necessary in my own country, the assertion is always received with an incredulous stare. That I should be consumed by no absorbing need of offspring, and craving for progeny, should not wish to have little children in each of my rooms, sons to dangle on the knee, daughters to add fuel to my parental love, passes belief. "Can it be possible you can live at home," said a Brahmin to me, "without wishing to see a little boy standing on the threshold ready to receive you when you come in? Can you exist, without the glad voices of

children in your compound, and without a wife to cook dainties with her own hands for your supper?" And he shook his head negatively; but suddenly conscious that he had committed a breach of Oriental etiquette in mentioning a woman in male society, he quietly walked off without awaiting any reply.

But something very like an objurgation recalls me from my meditative abstraction, and I find that, unconsciously, I have been on the point of walking over a group of card-players. Many such parties are seated crossed-legged on the parched turf I have now wandered upon, a mat being used as an impromptu card-table, with a lamp in its centre, to be lighted during the wonderfully short interval of gloom which in the tropics divides the day from the night. What games beyond whist, chess, and dice-throwing are played I cannot gather; the anxiety on the faces of the gamblers is as great as at Monaco, the battles are waged as noisily as in Italian Clubs, and stakes are always laid down, for no native can understand a game being played simply for the love of winning it. But pleasanter gatherings than these soon attract me; natives seated on a coarse carpet telling stories and fairy tales; a score of bosom friends gathered around the outer edge of a shawl for the purpose of unlimited chatter; Parsee ladies, with their offspring, squatting and vehemently talking; ayahs chatting to native bearers under the light of butties already lighted; and a beggar

singing with a wilder gamut than any beast, bird or fowl I have ever yet heard. And what a contrast this group, noisily laughing, chanting their horrible ditties, with their arms all akimbo, are to yonder players, solemn as the grave, mysterious as a banyan grove !

Certainly, Parsee juveniles are making the best of the holiday they owe to one of their ancient Persic heroes. A portion of the Maidan is destined to cricket, and boys and youths of the Zoroastrian persuasion are at present vigorously batting, bowling and fielding. The style is assuredly not such as one might see at Lords ; no professional here teaches the young idea how to shoot ; no catapult discharges the ball with terrible force. The game is played somewhat after the manner of rustics on our own village greens, but it is played with thorough zest, in a natural way, with none of the swagger of our wealthy amateurs in flannels, padded gloves, impregnable leg-guards and showy, striped jackets. The Sabeian bowling is, to be sure, rather like a girl's helpless, effeminate, underhand throw ; the fielder as often lets the ball slip as he catches it, but there is plenty of pluck shown at the wicket. Here and there one sees a little Parsee tomboy scampering in her gauze sudra or sacred shirt, with her hair down her back, who, as a great favour, is permitted to pick up the balls her little brothers vigorously strike about. But, as a rule, the little lass and the babe prefer to be in their ayah's charge near the sea-

shore, dragging some English toy-steamer or diminutive waggon over the gravel before a sitting group of delighted mammas, aunts, cousins, and smiling grandsires. By the way, I have never yet seen a native child with a doll, or any make-shift for one.

Whilst our national game is being played here, the furthestmost portion of the Esplanade is crowded with the booths of a Zoroastrian fair, held in honour of the festival occurring to-day. Several vendors are selling liquids in brightly-coloured bottles, others toys or idols manufactured at Benares or, more often, in Birmingham. A Hindoo woman bargains for a wooden knight, armed cap-a-pie, which is foisted on her as an effigy of Vishnu supreme, whilst her little child toddles off with a picture of the Two-Headed Nightingale, under the impression she has secured a two-headed native deity. Pretty urchins by the side of their mothers are beating newly-bought drums; babies in arms are sucking glutinous sweets or, more probably, flicking about tiny whips, or sailing a newly-purchased balloon. The native woman rejoices over the toys as much as her own children do; she insists on winding up the machinery of mice, crying dolls, and pumping fire-engines, and is intensely amused by a nodding ape or salaaming puppet. Even sober paterfamilias will relax his saturnine muscles over a clockwork baa-lamb, and his ideas of European ingenuity vastly enlarge as he twirls, with meditative brow,

a regiment of wooden Grenadiers from one sentry-box to another, over a narrow platform of wood. The children's fair in Paris at the New Year is not, I venture to say, a more enjoyable sight than all these busy members of a Parsee family, turned out in their best, to give their little ones the greatest pleasure the cashbox can afford. The evening air is noisy with the sound of the tin trumpet, the roll of the drum, the whirl of the rattle, merry laughter, and the wild exclamations of delight of a thickly-packed crowd.

The devout Hindoo purchases small bottles of Ganges water, whilst the greedy and gluttonous devour horrible spotted plum cakes and masses of pastry. Swings, laden with natives, revolve in the air like flashing kaleidoscopes; the wretched little lions of the merry-go-round are every one mounted; on the ground heaps of copper pots set out for sale are lighted up with tallow dips. Several vendors have already gone to sleep alongside their wares, and have left their wives or daughters to carry on the endless and noisy bargaining. Two long rows of canvas booths attract the sightseer with their various goods, whilst entertainments are going on within three hermetically closed marquees. One of these is devoted to a serpent-charmer, whose noisy flute is shrill enough to drown the cries of the beggars and refreshment purveyors. The other contains hermaphrodites from Delhi in the dress of females and men's turbans, ill-smelling and disgust-

ing objects. Gay advertisements hang outside the third booth in English, Hindoo and Gujerathi, and a placard embellished with grotesque caricatures of the British informs me that a species of Gallic and feminine Vance is to be seen within.

Travelling Thespians have rarely occupied a more patched and wretched shelter than that which I now step into. Natives standing along the canvas walls leave a large square space covered with turf, in the centre of which a poor French girl, dressed as a Parisian bride, is now to be seen. A Parsee showman walks round about her as if she were a figure of wax, describing the character she is now supposed to be impersonating, whilst a whiskered monsieur garrulously mounts guard over the receiver of custom's bowl at the door. Very tattered are the nuptial boots, the ribbons and laces, and when the poor attenuated thing begins to kneel and go through all sorts of antics as if she were prostrating herself at the altar, Parsee women, no longer able to restrain their curiosity, draw near her to inspect her toilet and to pull it rudely about. And to secure an additional anna or two, the victim has to pull her gloves off, and on, to show how they are fastened, to take off her veil, and—excuse me these details—to pull up her skirts and show her torn garters. Long after she has disappeared to change her dress behind a screen drawn over part of the tent, the natives titter as we do when an

Aztec, Zulu, or other exotic does something we think uncommonly odd.

But the large begging shell of benevolence and charity was now carried round, but alas ! but very few pice were showered into it.

How often the poor creature disappeared behind the veil and re-appeared I cannot say. Now she enacted a shikaree dressed in karkee, gruffly calling for pegs and drinking endless imaginary glasses of whiskey out of a flask. Anon, as a tar, the cap worn on one side, in blue serge, the clasp knife passed in the loose trousers, she showed herself ready to fight, and coarsely swore in her native tongue. But in a moment or two she changed the uniform for a Brittany peasant's bright petticoat and trim jacket, with endless beads, which the glib Parsee showman interpreted to his audience as being the dress usually worn by our English women at home. As a *cantinière*, she was palmed off on the audience as a London nautch girl ; when habited as a nun, she was described as being a Saxon ayah, and when she appeared beperiwigged, well-powdered, a sceptre in her hand, a gilt mantle over her back, the mendacious Parsee shouted out, " Behold Queen Victoria ! " Then, to satisfy the indigenes, she had to eat with a knife and fork, to sing, to repeat many prayers, and to mimic the Madam Sahib, stiffly erect, as she drives in her carriage. In garments that would have done ample justice to the worst clothes shops of Monmouth Street or

the Pays Latin, she took off the Anglo-Indian, his lady, his daughter, a proceeding watched with the polite stare with which we look on a Chinaman wielding chop-sticks, or the horned ladies of Lebanon. The amused natives shook with laughter to hear her shout "Damn," to see her fly as if before the imaginary tiger the Parsee described, and the fairer portion of the audience giggled till tears came to their eyes to behold her scrub her teeth with a brush. Ignominious as the entertainment certainly was to our countrymen, I gathered from it not a few hints how the indigene regards us, and I fear the general impression is not favourable.

But, at length, tired of Mademoiselle Godiche and her Protean changes, I strolled off home, saddened by the thoughts of the wretched existence the occidental Bohemian must lead in India. Tens of thousands of native musicians beat the tom-tom in Oudh and Berar, hundreds of hereditary native actors and actresses enact plays from bamboo platforms in our presidency; and amidst these the European company wretchedly vegetates, oppressed by a civilization they know nothing of, and a deadly, inimical people. Servile, smooth, and unctuous to the rich foreigner the Asiatic is rude, tyrannical, not to say cruel, to the white man directly he falls in the world, or occupies a modest place in it.

LETTER X.

AMATEUR THEATRICALS.

SATURDAY, 9TH JUNE, 1883.

BOMBAY.

I HAVE but just returned from our European Theatre, where I have been to see a performance by Parsee amateurs. The drama selected was "Savitri," and it was enacted in the Gujerathi dialect. The piece in question is a classic piece of the Hindoo repertory, and it is almost as well known in England as Sakountala is.

Like all other theatrical, musical, or equestrian performances in Bombay, the entertainment was announced to commence at nine o'clock at night, the doors opening half an hour or so before that time. When I drove up a great crowd of rich natives had already gathered round the entrances to the best places. Being the only European then present, my arrival created some surprise and no slight amusement.

But room was at once made for me to pass into the theatre, the throng opened of itself and closed behind my steps. The Briton possesses an undisputed right to take precedence of the Oriental here, as elsewhere in the empire. In the street the Asiatic cedes the whole width of the pavement to you, at an amusement you walk before him. Politeness may forbid your pushing him aside, but to keep him in his station a constant self-assertion of one's dignity is necessary.

A Parsee gentleman, officiating as box-keeper, at once handed me my ticket. I then strolled into the house, and a pretty house it is.

We have stalls and a pit here exactly as in England, but only two tiers of seats encircle the arena; the upper tier forms a gallery, the lower tier is exclusively devoted to boxes. These boxes are very prettily hung with red and white curtains, looped up in festoons, but cane-bottomed chairs replace the luxurious padded seats of a London theatre. This is not the only sacrifice of luxury to comfort, coolness, and ease, for one everywhere misses the plush and velvet one is so accustomed to in Europe. The uniform white and blue, with which the house is painted, is nevertheless a relief after the excessive gilded mouldings and cornices of an English metropolitan theatre. The arena is well lighted by a handsome chandelier, with twinkling coruscating crystal pendants. The drop scene represents the usual classical temple in ruins, with a volcano in the distance, and a lake studded with boats of a

Neapolitan build in the foreground. Sir Richard Temple, late Governor of Bombay, is said to have painted a very superior curtain, but I am told it is never allowed to be used for native performances.

Never before had I seen so picturesque an audience. The front rows of the boxes were entirely filled with Parsee ladies in their finest attire—one blaze of multi-coloured silks of the deepest and richest hues. Purple satin cloaks, with broad borders of embroidered flowers in floss silks; yellow, blue, pink, and green brocades worked with gold thread, large loose sleeves of the finest muslin, satin trousers, added many an attraction to the charms of the wearers. Behind them lolled their husbands and many sons, wearing the black mitre and long white frock with enormously long sleeves tucked up in wrinkles over the wrist, which constitutes the full evening dress of these fire worshippers. Here and there the serried lines were interrupted by groups of lovely boys clad in small velvet caps embroidered with gold or silver braids, dressed in yellow, blue, or red silk coats, bedecked with lace pinafores falling over gaudy satin trousers, and with fingers and arms laden with jewels and pretty childish bracelets. Dark little damsels also wore much of their parents' worldly wealth in the shape of long strings of jewels hanging from the heavily weighted ears, and carcanets, studded with precious stones, shimmering over the transparent beauty of the closely drawn chemisette. The stalls were a replica of the boxes; the pit one mass of moving

turbaned heads, and tunics of all shades and varieties; the red peaked cap of the Bania, the strange headdress of the Marwaree were side by side. Magnificent scarves of gossamer muslin, shot with threads of golds, decorated many a masculine shoulder; the waistbands were carefully drawn around the snowy-white frocks, the well-starched sleeves hung outside the brightly-coloured cloaks. This being an exceptional entertainment, men and women sat in close proximity, but on a usual "native night" the fair sex are usually altogether absent from the play. Being the only European present, my head was the only male head uncovered, for in public the Asiatic never appears bareheaded.

I was shown to a seat—the only one vacant—and took my place. On my either side sat rich Hindoos, and immediately before me a Parsee mother and her two daughters-in-law, their garments glinting with sheen, their jewels mounted too heavily, but wearing diamonds really well set. This fair trio took a sly peep at the curiously-minded European, and then immediately, with great rustling, drew their hoods close to their faces and tightly as possible under the chin, in order, no doubt, to make their cheeks look both round and smooth, and turned round with eyes fixed upon the stage. They did not sport fans, scent bottles, or lorgnettes, as our countrywomen do when at the play, but they were perpetually tucking up their silken coifs to show their jewelled

hands, and they chattered enormously, being eager to know the names of all the audience. Inasmuch as the feminine mind of India is not highly cultivated, like most of the womankind present, they had come not to see the play, but to see and to be seen by the spectators. And what a contrast was the soft simpering, almost rustic simplicity of the faces of these two Parsee girls to the sharp, shrewd, business-like air almost universally written on the features of their countrymen. It is, indeed, true that the maternal chaperone possessed an admirably clever and sedate physiognomy; but this expressed rather innate intelligence than the refined and educated outcome of the mind. Like almost every Oriental present, having never worn stays to preserve her figure, the old dame had grown abdominally stout, voluminous, unduly corpulent, and puffy-looking. Her carriage was most majestic, and her smiles were sour and very censorious. Every exotic flower, every Oriental fruit must have been pressed into the service of her perfumer, and the odour her garments distilled was almost overpowering to my western nerves. It is the fashion with the Parsees to bring their families to see English performances; but I heard her thanking her stars she would at least see something she could comprehend to-night, and not "Madame Angot" or "Olivette," unintelligible to her as "Don Giovanni" to a New Zealander.

I had scarcely finished my survey when Sir Jamsetjee Jeejibhoy, the patron of the Amateur

Dramatic Society, entered his private box. The house welcomed him with several rounds of applause, many of the audience rose, the delighted Baronet made the grandest salaam, and sat down rippling with smiles. He had scarcely finished nodding to his intimate acquaintances, when the curtain drew up.

The characters were enacted by talented young men, and to the most effeminate amongst their number the female *rôles* were assigned. The Parsee lady is daily becoming less secluded in her habits, but it will probably be long before she consents to appear on a public stage. Her absence from the boards is, however, no very great loss, for she is most effectually replaced by youths, who, dressed in female attire, look, walk, and speak precisely like her.

After a good deal of wearisome recitative had passed between a king and a beggar, a youth, tricked out as a maidservant, danced very prettily. All the movements were very slow, almost monotonous, but pleasing, the steps not so intricate or mazy as ours. The gestures of the arms were perfect, the carriage of the head and figure admirable. Advancing and retiring, now with one hand uplifted over the face, now with the other, the limbs were managed with unsurpassed dexterity. It was a cadenced, voluptuous, and languid motion, and very refined; indeed, a tentative to introduce the obscenity of the nautch was promptly suppressed by violent hisses. He chanted as he moved, and

the tom-tom and strings played as musically as it is possible for them to play. His toilet was a success, for which, I presume, his wife was to be congratulated, for the garments he wore were probably those of her Mahommedan maid.

He was clad in a rosy silk bodice clinging quite close to the figure, and provided with tight little sleeves barely reaching the elbow. Two narrow bands of gold lace encircled the neck of this vestment, but its armlets were finished off with bright borders of yellow embroidery. A many-folded gauze skirt of rare gloss and delicate tints tied round the waist was permitted to fall as far as his knees. Slashed and slit in innumerable ways, the light muslin afforded the rarest combinations of colour, blue, gold, green, and ultramarine being alternately revealed and concealed as he moved, rustled, or stirred. From under the round of this beautiful garment wide Oriental trousers fell in bulging and voluminous folds, but the silken circumference was slightly retrenched at the ankles, around which they were looped with running ribbons and satin rosettes. The hair was worn loosely all over the shoulders, and prettily ornamented with little yellow flowers, the balmy usura, the blooming patal and delicate buds highly prized by eastern females.

The dance and song finished, he retired to make way for the youth who enacted "Queen Savetri." This personage was splendidly clad in a rich yellow silk gown, and the beautiful folds of a rich

yellow mantle were artistically draped over the back of his head, brought slightly over the shoulders, and permitted to fall like a pallium or chalymys all over the back. His well-oiled black hair, worn in glossy bandeaux, was gathered in one tight little knot at the back of the neck. A light scarf of fine Dacca muslin, embroidered with gold thread, was thrown over the shoulders with such arrant coquetry that elderly ladies regarded it as hardly proper. Numerous were his hair-fastenings, his gold bodkins, and pins, and as a head-gear he wore a simple snood of netted gold wire trimmed with sapphire bandlets and repeated borders of pearl. The ears were depressed with tiny bright gems representing cupids, birds, and tilka flowerets, but the inferior lobes were distended by bangles of varying size. Around the neck a flat collar, set with rare stones and brilliants, shone on the dark skin, and beneath this bead necklaces of glass, coral, or amber and silver chains of ever different pattern formed scintillating successions of circles upon the heaving bosom and shoulders. About the waist a girdle of very bright metal upheld tintinnabulating bells and costly satin tassels, which served both to attract attention to, as well as fasten the dress. The bodice of fine muslin worked with crimson silk and flowered with silver, fashionably transparent, sat close to the shape without a single wrinkle or perceptible seam. The pyjamas, or wide trousers of white satin, fell loosely over the

instep and were hemmed with rich bullion fringes. Upon the soft wrists and each smooth arm bracelets and bangles of gold, glass, ivory, and shell glittered and tinkled. The finger-nails were slightly tinged with red-henna, the hands were touched up with red-ochre, the complexion with saffron. His back view resembled nothing so much as that of a nun vested in the most gorgeous of silks, but his front aspect put one in mind of Vashti steeped in rich unguents, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense and all the powders of the merchant, bedecked, and voluptuous appearing before King Ahasuerus. This full dress of a Hindoo princess suited him admirably, and he was fully conscious of it as he admiringly contemplated the superb scintillations of his costume. He sang very mincingly as he leant on the arm of a Court musician, who wore a hat shaped like a sugar-loaf, with an ostrich plume waving at its apex, and twanged a species of viol. Every woman in India—secluded or not—is almost as expert as a jewel merchant in estimating the worth of precious stones, but I am really afraid to mention the value put upon Queen Savetri's jewelry, so fabulous did it seem. Schneider with all her diamonds on, or Adelina Patti adorned with the gifts of the crowned heads of Europe, was not so resplendent a show.

For two mortal hours Her Majesty, the maid, the musician, the King, and the beggar passed on and off the stage. There were never more than

two *dramatis personæ* present at one and the same time, save once, when a horrisonous quartet was sung. The solo recitatives were prodigiously long, the duets excessively nasal, the rhapsodies eternal as those of the Italian improvisatore. No sign of passion, or even feeling, disturbed the complacent expression of the players. There was no stamping, fretting, and strutting; the most tragical accents, the most ordinary remarks, were all pitched in the self-same unvarying tone, without the least inflection of voice. Not a pleat in the King's vestment was ruffled by his emotions. Savetri's brow was beaded by no perspiration; her features expressed a pleased and smiling vacancy. The drum and the fiddles yielding soulless music, changed from one monotonous measure to another; the prompter stood in the wings. All was dignified, irreproachable, conducive to sleep; in short, just the sober excitement the native so keenly delights in. The same European scenery did service for all three acts; the curtain rose and fell, fell and rose, and all went on as before—the same gestures of the arms, the same attitudes, very graceful at first, but now grown thoroughly wearisome, the identical feminine mannerisms with which we had started. Alack! alack! what a surfeit of iteration, repetent refrains, and thrumming guttural notes to the sounds of the cylindrical drum played with two fingers. What would I not have given for a hearty old English tune such as "Tramp, tramp, my boys a marching" from my favourite

Parsee troupe in Urdu, in exchange for these melancholy Gujerathi ditties.

I do not intend to weary you with my impressions of the Hindoo drama, or trouble you with the recital of the plot of a play you will find in any standard work on Indian literature. The construction of these pieces is exceedingly feeble, the incidents are simple to childishness, and the wit, catch-words, and *double-entendres* somewhat tame to the European. Love and intrigue is the centre around which most of the episodes revolve. Some distressed princess, hounded by a wicked and powerful prince, who is eventually put to death by the immaculate lover, is the usual story they tell. The more magic they have to do with, the more appreciative become the spectators, for the credulous Hindoo imagination finds nothing risible in beds ascending heavenwards, heroes and heroines flying to the earth, and they scream with delight when the Eastern Prospero sets fireworks alight in bronze cresets to marshal the winds, to bring down welcome rain, or summon ghosts, devs, and demons. Our moral code is so totally dissimilar to their own that we find it hard to look with any leniency on ethical maxims which regard the abandonment of one's child to the hunger of a tiger as a memorable act of unselfishness, and which inculcate the handing over of one's wife to the lust of a fakir as a meritorious action. We also sadly miss those patriotic and liberal sentiments to which we have been accustomed since

Shakespeare's days, because we forget that patriotism and liberty are almost unknown in the East. Asiatic behaviour to women is so different to ours that we find it difficult to restrain openly expressing our scorn when we find the heroine led off the stage to be thrashed, or her maid well licked with the shoe for some petty act of disobedience. Our indignation rises to fever-heat when we mark the deep humility, almost amounting to slavishness, and so painful to see, with which the wife approaches her tyrant, and the tender, deprecating look—that reminds one of the expression in the eyes of the Cenci—which she casts on her husband when he condemns her to be bastinadoed stirs our latent chivalry. Fortunately for delicate nerves, the Hindoo punishes his victim behind the stage, and we are not distressed by the sight of the widow, adorned as a burnt-offering, mounting the funeral pyre, nor do we see the culprit undergoing horrible torture.

The tragical stories are as fantastic as Shakespeare's fairy comedies, as impossible as the Princess of Trebisonde and other old fabliaux. The comedies verge on Italian extravaganzas as depicted by Molière and Goldoni; the farce is a harlequinade in dumb show, and scarce any piece is performed without music. The sing-song recitative resembles the nasal Gregorian chants of the Romish priests, and the salaams, obeisances, and genuflexions are as plentiful as the bows and curtsies of the Greek heroines on a Racine night

at the Français. The state of manners represented is quite fantastic, and has little that is akin to modern everyday life, for the sanctity of the home is too sacred in the eyes of the Aryan to permit it to be put on the stage, and it is an inner sanctuary which no stranger may pry into. If our hearts are appealed to, it is seldom for the virtuous wife, the devoted daughter—creatures of real flesh and blood like ourselves—but most often we are required to become sympathetic over the woes of some purely idealistic creature or the distresses of the courtesan. But the sentiments and pathos appear so artificial that during my experience of the Sanscrit, Urdu, and Gujerathi drama I have more often felt inclined to laugh at the tearful scenes than to cry.

The amusement one derives when behind the scenes amidst Anglo-Indian players is non-existent in the case of a native troupe. There are no pretty Lydia Languish's in wonderful furbelows and cloudlets of lace to be congratulated on their acting; there are no theatrical stars to be consoled with because of the heat. Sadly one misses the charmer who has been rejoicing Calcutta or Madras with her Juliet or Rosalind during the cold season, and who so sweetly besought you to fan her, and to give her iced champagne or sherbet between the *entr'actes*. Where too is the little *prima donna* in muslin apron with little pockets, who so pleasantly looked out of the latticed window to fling a bouquet to the lovelorn

serenader just by the fragile and operatic cedar. The charming *ingénue*, whose small satin-clad feet were so pleasant to contemplate when she lay in her lover's arms, after having fainted during her three hours of tropical singing, has flown away too. Alas, they have gone back to delight our great London metropolis, and these poor Parsee boys have taken their place. The variegated dress of the last new *opéra bouffe* has made way for a costume old as Mahommedan rule in the Empire.

The Zoroastrian youth in his feminine dress makes the best of the *entr'actes* in being painted afresh. It amuses me to see that the native *coiffeur* uses many of the cosmetic preparations employed at home, and that the hare's foot and camel brush has penetrated out here. The poor hot head is for a moment relieved from the wig, the locks are combed and readjusted, and the performer adopts the new dress provided for him. Queen Savetri returns to the green room more resplendent than ever to endure the mild chaff of simple boys and sober Parsees. None of the performers have stripped to the waist for coolness' sake as genuine native actors so often do when off the stage. The theatrical properties here as elsewhere in native theatres in Bombay are similar to those of England and France, for thunder is made with a sheet of tin, the wind with a barrel, the hail by rattling parched peas in a caisson. A performer now and again is deputed to see through a hole in the curtain how the arena is filling, a

few patrons of the drama loll or stroll down the vistas of dusty scenery, the prompter is instructing a halting actor from a play-book printed in large and black Oriental characters. Now and again we hear the shouts of an impatient gallery, the stamp of eager feet, or the sounds of a shrill quarrel, for the Asiatic is nearly as rowdy in the theatre as the occidental, and is a perfect adept at the cat-call.

Her Majesty is suffering from stage fright, although her performance has met with due appreciation. The gorgeous handmaiden, through fear of spoiling her frock, has tied a napkin around her neck, and she is now eating ices and nuts as loudly as the holders of seats in the native pit. The tiny little bouquets, just like button-hole nosegays, the audience have thrown her, have greatly pleased her, and she regards them as affectionately as our *prima donne* do their large floral treasures. She seems nervous about her next theatrical venture as the heroine of "East Lynne," which is shortly to be acted in correct Parsee costume. The recent appearance of Parsee women as public actresses on the Indian stage displeases her greatly. A thud on the boards, and the sound of a bell deprives me of the society of these two pseudo-ladies, the only representatives of the fair sex behind the stage, and I retire once again to my seat.

But at eleven the curtain at length fell, and I fled from the house.

The lobbies were already filled with very somnolent Parsees, aping our European theatrical swagger. Many a Buchobai Maneckbai and Mothibai was finding her way to her carriage huddled quite close to her lord and husband with her children around her. There were hosts of bright-eyed little lasses named after silver, the diamond, the turquoise, the ruby, moonlight, sugar-like dainties, calling gently to each other; Dhunbai and Meherbai, the names of two of the Zoroastrian angels seeming to be very favourite appellations, Miss "Gold-thread" and "Delightful" not being uncommon. The men rejoiced in the names of Jehanghir, Ardaseer, Nusserwanjee, Framjee, Byramjee, Sorabjee, and very many others, and as the Parsees frequently adopt a terminal name either of some European family, or to denote the business they carry on, there was nothing surprising in hearing Mr. Bezonjee Kavasji Jackson's carriage being called for, nor was I astonished when Mr. Hormusjee Limjee Bonaparte and Mr. Dhadabhoy Perozshah Cashlender greeted me. I was much amused by seeing a low caste Hindoo lady most prudently removing her nose ring to hide it in her voluminous dress, for fear of thieves, whilst her daughter filled up the maternal nasal orifice with a tiny wooden peg. The Zoroastrian still regards fire as too sacred to permit it to be used for vile objects, so I had to stroll off without my cheroot, finding it quite impossible to borrow a match.

Outside amidst a dense throng of carriages, native liquor sellers and vendors of sweets were driving a busy trade. Tallow dips flared over their wickerwork baskets, and their white raiment and jewelry, in a picturesque way. On the pavements many a family was snoring, tucked up under blankets, their heads just peeping out of the bed-clothes.

LETTER XI.

THE BOMBAY CATHEDRAL.

SUNDAY, 10TH JUNE, 1883.

BOMBAY.

IMAGINE that you now see me seated on a cane-bottomed arm-chair midway up the nave of the Cathedral of Bombay, the chief place of Anglican worship out here. Very long punkahs, pulled with great effort from outside, swing over the heads of the congregation, and throughout the service one hears the straining of running ropes and the swirl of the air. A fine volunteer choir sing the hymns we are so fond of at home, and with the exception of the heat one might well suppose one's self in a London metropolitan church.

The edifice has not one single point of architectural beauty to recommend it to the archæologist. A square tower surmounts it, heavy and ugly whitewashed columns, said to approximate the

Tuscan, support its vaulted roof, the style, if any, is a debased Hanoverian, and it is lighted by gas jets set in the roof just like those of a concert hall. With proclivities to Ritualism our altar seems pale, nevertheless, when contrasted with the gold candlesticks, costly vases, and floral treasures of the sacrament tables of our native land. None of the epitaphs are peculiarly distinguished for literary skill, and the memories commemorated on the many tablets hanging round the walls are, as a rule, of purely local interest. Let it, therefore, suffice to say that Duncan, whose successful efforts suppressed infanticide near Benares and in Kathiawar, has a monument here, that Sir James Mackintosh has written an inscription in his best classical style for one Stephen Babington, and that Sir Henry Maitland, who conveyed Napoleon to St. Helena, lies buried here.

The congregation is this morning somewhat smaller than usual, inasmuch as the Governor and his staff are away at Poona. We miss our Proconsul, surrounded by his little body of aides-de-camp, clattering up the tessellated floor of marble between the rows of cane-bottomed arm-chairs. Several ladies have blushed forth in all the beauty of new toilettes arrived from London by the last mails, or produced by the deft fingers of the Anglo-Indian dressmaker. The fair worshippers are as completely fitted out with sixteen-button kid gloves as any fashionable devotee of

Parisian Saint Roche. Scent bottles, vinaigrettes, fans, perfumed handkerchiefs, are all alternately applied to in the desperate effort to keep cool and to appear wide awake. Parsee youths, Parsee ladies, are not more relentlessly scented than our countrywomen, and the Eurasians distil a perfectly overpowering odour of native patchouli. Even elderly women, who ought to know better, are resplendent in juvenile flounces, satin bows, and deep crimson sashes; grandams wear the most stylish of feathered Gainsborough hats, and senile coquettes the last fad in lace bonnets.

Englishwomen never know how to learn to grow old, and least of all out here in the East. Sexagenarians will torment their husbands with the endless bills of milliners for childish fopperies of every description, and the veriest old crone will have half-a-dozen tailors stitching "things" for her in her verandah. I have known a sybil keep a score of Portuguese boys hard at work with sewing machines for a week over her costume for the next reception at Government House, and ransack the town for cosmetics for her wizened complexion. Happily there are but few aged women out in Bombay, and such exhibitions are of infrequent occurrence. But, alas, the young quickly fade in this trying climate, and, though they do not prematurely grow old with the startling rapidity of the Hindoo woman, their cheeks become so pale and so wan that they remind one of the washed-out girls one sees at the end of a London season in every ball-room.

The majority of the married women now attending service have not yet reached their twenty-second or twenty-third years. They still seem mere school-girls, though they have already gathered quite a little family around them. Beyond a good deal of gossip of a peculiarly ill-natured description, they have scarce any amusement, unless it be in an occasional dance. The energy with which they indulge in saltatory pastimes amazes the native, who wonders how anyone can wish to make himself hot by dancing with an "immodest woman who publicly clasps one around the waist in a room of scanty dimensions and boiling temperature."

The proportion of the male sex so far outnumber the fair that here, as elsewhere in India, the men are wallflowers, and every lady is sure of half a score of partners. Our countrywomen quickly lose their energy in the tropics for everything except the waltz, and a brilliant conversationalist or amusing talker is a *rara avis*.

The gilded youth of our Imperial City have also their representatives here, for ladies in India invariably draw the male sex after them wherever they go. Superb in white waistcoats, dressed precisely in the same style as if attending a fashionable service at home, with the silk top-hat—brought out once a week—carefully placed under the seat, our Beau Brummels drawl their responses or glare through their eye-glasses. The gold watch chain hangs out showily from the fob,

rings flash, the gloves are nattily placed over neat and miniature prayer-books bound in ivory or Russian leather. At the breast pocket a silk handkerchief, either blue, red, or white, casts a pleasing speck of colour over the black coat, and the very small quantity of hair which an Indian climate leaves on the head has been carefully smoothed, and glows with fresh oils and the last capillary specific. The male congregation, like the female, are also all wonderfully young looking, for in Bombay elderly Europeans are an exception, never the rule.

Further down the church the white faces of England are contrasted with the tawny visages of a few Eurasians and converted Indo-Portuguese. There is not one single Hindoo, Parsee, or Moslem in the aisles, not an ayah in the nave, the indigenous population is altogether absent. Although the congregation is a very fair one, it does but half fill the very numerous rows of chairs and benches.

I fear we are not religiously inclined out here, and that our faith, if not absolutely lacking, has waxed uncommonly cool. Universal toleration is the rule at our tables, and infidel opinions of the most pronounced type can be advocated without risk of depreciation in public opinion. Heretical dogmas are usually received with the utmost callousness, and this, perhaps, more than anything else, shows how lukewarm we are about our creed.

Many ladies attend church simply from an idea it behoves them as leaders of society to do so. Few are surprised to find their husbands playing cards on the Sabbath, and an excuse is never expected to justify a breach of the fourth commandment. The slightest plea for non-attendance at Divine service is readily grasped at in a climate where the effort of dressing, and of listening to any continued discourse for a length of time, are acts of considerable self-sacrifice. The man who has been working his brain relentlessly during the week will naturally prefer a lounge in the long-armed chair, or a lazy stroll in his garden, to the upright position and stiff decorum entailed by a visit to the sacred edifice.

Then, to be sure, if the day is fine, there are tempting excursions to be made to the Lake of Vihar, the palm woods of Mahim or Elephanta, which prove irresistible. For dogmas and doctrines we care next to nothing, and even the fundamental articles of Christian belief meet with but an indolent assent. Our countrywomen have no district visiting, no Dorcas Clubs, no religious coteries to keep their energies active, and the clergy are too few to control public opinion. Our Sabbath is as well spent as among the higher classes in England, but it is more devoted to hospitality than to prayers and sermons.

And nothing appears more startling than the contrast between our very effete worship and that of the native. No shower, however torrential it

may be, will deter the devout Parsee from performing his matutinal acts of devotion on the shore under his gaily coloured umbrella. Through the worst weather he will be found reading his liturgical book, his feet imbedded in damp sand, the waves curling around his dripping garments, by the ocean. A Hindoo would prefer torture rather than be remiss in his ancestral worship or his customary puja at some distant deity's shrine. Moslems, at a great sacrifice of money and health, travel to Mecca, enduring heat, hunger, and poverty without a single murmur by the way, if only they may kiss the Kaaba. That an additional rise of a few degrees in the thermometer should deter anyone from attending his ceremonial worship and weekly services seems to them beyond all comprehension. Hence they tell us we have no religion, and perhaps, alas ! they are not far wrong.

But, undaunted by the paucity of the congregation, the Bishop, aided by two priests, reverently performs the service. To appreciate the excessive beauty of our liturgy one must hear it read in a foreign land. Then each vocable brings us dear recollections of home, and the all-comprehensive verses of the Litany are tragic with pathos. How colourless seem the hymns of the Vedas, the songs of the Gathas, by the side of the stern and deeply religious common-sense appeals of our English Prayer-book to the Divine mercy ! How ridiculous are the sacred books of

Asia, with their preposterous miracles, their cures for the dog, magic and fantastic fooleries, by the side of the simple pages of the New Testament ! Christ alone with His disciples amongst the corn-fields of Bethany is more majestic than Krishna surrounded by his myriad hordes of dancing girls, and Saint John in Patmos far grander than Sakyamouni under the bodh tree. And yet, notwithstanding the evident super-excellence of the Christian creed, an uncomfortable feeling creeps over the mind that Catholicism and Protestantism have never been meant to be the religion of the native.

With intellects naturally predisposed to the gorgeous and the fantastic, in vain can we hope that the simple story of the Saviour will deeply appeal to the native mind. Numbers of the lower classes are undoubtedly converted from time to time, but the bulwarks of heathenism as respects the richer and more intelligent classes are as inexpugnable as when the first missionaries landed at Goa. Loss of caste, deprivation of friends, expulsion from family commensality and worship are deterrents towards any leaning to the Nazarene's faith, sufficiently powerful to prevent much progress being made in evangelization. The equality and freedom accorded to women by the tenets of the Christian faith seem repulsive, immodest, and very odious to the Aryan husband. Moreover, the good that missionaries would often do is occasionally hindered by the contrast drawn

by the native between the faith we profess and the lives which we lead. If sufficiently educated to be able to read English, the Hindoo is acquainted with the scientific books of the day, and if he loses all faith in his own religious cosmogomy, he also finds our faith assailed on all sides by materialists, our holy book scathed by acute criticism, and our Testament jeered at by the scientist. As his knowledge of western science increases, he parts for ever with his Brahminical notions for those of our last Astronomer Royal. Sedulous to conduct the ceremonial observances of his creed as if he still believed in it, too timid to profess a public apostacy, spending large sums at popular festivals to ensure public applause, he nevertheless lapses into rank atheism. In choice select circles, behind closed doors, with a few choice spirits, he argues for and against the beliefs which men hold with the coolness of a chess-player, simply for the mental gymnastics such arguments yield him, simply for the pleasure of suggesting wire-drawn quiddities so favoured by the scholiasts of old. If ever the bias of early training or a spark of sentiment should turn his mind towards religion again, it will probably be to a severe theism, and he then enters the Mahommedan fold. Under these circumstances there seems scanty hope of the evangelization of the educated Hindoo, who has drank of the fountains of western learning.

And let it always be remembered that the

singular elasticity of the Brahminical creed is admirably calculated to retain the affections of those members of the Hindoo race who are as yet uninfluenced by occidental studies. To the person fond of travelling this creed affords a never-ending round of pilgrimages to distant shrines, to holy rivers and sacred fanes; to the person who is indolent and inane, a life of contemplation and abstraction. The darkest creeds and most abstruse mysteries are provided for the superstitious, and a mythology almost sublime in its transcendent absurdities delights the mind of the credulous and imaginative. The popular and childish are charmed by its superb ceremonies, its processions, its idols of gold, its sacrificial ritual. Those tired of the world can at any time seclude themselves in the forest or jungle, or settle on the hill of ashes as fakirs, Gurus, and holy men. The penitentially inclined obtain remission by a self-torture, which in its publicity approaches a self-glorification, and the easy sinner sins on with impunity, well knowing that absolution is purchasable on the death bed. The student finds his intellect captivated by a creed suggestive of problems more subtle than those of any European faith, and the antiquarian is provided with an infinite realm of research in a religious literature outrivalling in its voluminousness every other under the heavens. It is, indeed, a faith suited to every variety of temperament and circumstance of life, calculated to retain the affections of

millions of votaries for many thousands of years hence, grounded on a gigantic basis, and no feeble and fugitive conceit. The Mussulman and Parsee religions have, no doubt, as much to recommend them to their respective devotees, and even the fetish worship of the aboriginal tribes has shown itself inexpugnable to the attacks of the missionary.

But, in the teeth of these difficulties, the Christian heralds of salvation with stout hearts persevere in their spiritual husbandry, prompt to go whither God sends them. They fondly look forward to a time when the unchangeable and indomitable nature of most Indian religious systems shall be dislodged by the messengers of the Cross. Removed from Christian society, sympathy, and assistance, they travel in a climate which superinduces premature lassitude and begets and nourishes indolence and various distempers of both body and mind. In far-lying districts, among a people of strange tongue and stranger hearts, they gather small audiences around their open-air pulpits, institute smaller schools, dedicate native churches for a maligned and outcast congregation. Every now and again they arouse the fury of Panchayets, Sabhas, and Sanhedrines by making a conversion of some notable youth of good family, and telegraph home that the stoutest branches of the Upas-tree of Error are at length lopped. In the face of strong opposition, they procure the Government sanction to their female

converts wearing a little additional clothing, or obtain the favourable decision of a High Court respecting some boy with proclivities for evangelization, who has fled from his furious and murderously-inclined family to take refuge at their altars. Otherwise things remain in *statu quo*, the sheep in the fold do not largely increase, and there are ever many deserters who relapse into the well-loved old forms of faith and idolatrous belief. In vain have adult men again returned to school to learn local dialects in order to be able to converse with the native in his own tongue; in vain have sages in western divinity consented to sit at the feet of village gossips the better to win the native heart. The Christian press groans under tons of texts printed in strange Oriental characters, the type is polyglotic, the Scriptures are translated in the vernacular of almost every Indian village, but as yet the immeasurable harvest shows little signs of a general ingathering. The idol shrines and temples of India are still numerous enough, if they were collected together, to form a city as large as London, and the personal, domestic, and public idols of the Hindoos exceed ten times the population of our great English metropolis. Every scheme appears to have been tried to draw the Hindoo, the Iranian, the Jain, the Dravidian to Christ, and none has as yet proved exceptionally successful.

But it was reserved for the Salvation Army of Bombay to show that Christian ingenuity was not

as yet completely exhausted in its efforts at evangelization. For several weeks, amidst much turbulence, our streets have been paraded by a noisy throng of Englishmen dressed up as Hindoos, Parsees, and Mussulmans, and in other eastern costumes, who, with singing of national hymns set to native words and native music, have struck consternation throughout the Moslem and Brahminical quarters of our town. We have seen our countrywomen wearing the female attire of India, in saris, pyjamas, and gaily-coloured stuffs, publicly expose themselves to the indelicate remarks of the dusky and irritated spectators, and step forth as stump orators on a public platform to shock a native audience by their loud and boastful self-revelations. These masqueraders have applied for our alms, pleading that India, from the great extent of its population, the obligations we owe it, and its accessibility as a field of missionary operations, deserves especial regard, and their pleading has not been made in vain. But what possible good can result from a semi-religious pantomime which exposes our creed to public derision I cannot imagine.

You will, of course, understand that the above remarks are made only with reference to the male population and the lower classes of the female population of India. The high caste and aristocratic lady is unapproachable by the missionary, for he is debarred like every other man from entrance into the harem or the zenana. Many

European ladies have, however, undertaken this form of proselytism, but their merciful visitations are prized by the secluded inmates rather as a means of satisfying their curiosity about the strange ways of white women, or to gain a little medical advice, than on spiritual grounds. The education of these captives has, as a rule, been so entirely neglected, that they are unable to read the native publications placed in their hands, and their retirement and bashfulness prevent their attendance at any place of public concourse. The husband is seldom drawn to Christ at the same time as his wife, and the weaker vessel is too much of a slave and a prisoner to dare even to hint at starting Christianity on her own account were she inclined to do so. The zenana mission lady is too often looked on as a visitor who pleasantly relieves the humdrum of the gynecœia for a few hours, and whose contact is to be carefully avoided and condoned for by plentiful bathing and ceremonial purifications.

These thoughts, which come to me unsolicited, occupy my attention so entirely that I find we have arrived at the end of the sermon ere they leave me. Of the discourse I possess but faint recollections beyond that the curate—a recent importation—spoke of the fields and hedges of England, as if such things were existent out here. With a well-sung hymn after the pastoral blessing, we are dismissed—outside the church clock chimes a quarter to one—and, amidst a large

number of carriages ready to take the worshippers back to tiffin, we thread our way. The servants are more than usually polite, for the Sabbatical silk hat and Sunday coat always produce a deeper obeisance from the native than the light-coloured or white linen coat and solar helmet of every-day wear.

LETTER XII.

THE FORT.

MONDAY, 11TH JUNE, 1883.

BOMBAY.

UNLIKE other Asiatic cities, Bombay is not divided into numerous districts, each of which is especially ascribed to some one peculiar nationality. If the European shows a preference for dwelling in the Fort or on Malabar Hill he is also to be found in Mazagon. The Moslem chiefly flocks in the neighbourhood of the Abdool Rahimon Street, but the believer of the Koran may be met with elsewhere than in Bhendy Bazaar. The Hindoo has a predilection for Walkeshwar and the busy haunts of the native town, but his taste is not singular as many a Persian and Arabian residence testifies. And Parsees trade and live in the city and near the market as well as in their stronghold the Fort, a district so called from the military

rampart once standing thereon, but long since removed.

And it is in this latter quarter, once resonant with the blast of the trumpet and the shock of arms, but now so essentially commercial and domestic that the fireworshipper is to be seen engaged in his business or spending his leisure in the midst of his family to the best advantage. Many broad streets, with European names and magnificent offices of our merchant princes line the outskirts of the locality; but as one penetrates inwards the wide streets narrow into lanes with native names, the overhanging eaves on either side overshadow passages too restricted for vehicular traffic, and scarcely permitting two or three wayfarers to pass abreast. The remarkably pure air blowing up from the sea becomes perceptibly heavy with the normal smells of an Oriental city, and the nostrils are alternately titillated with odours of cooking, incense, and the hundred other perfumes which compose the Aryan street bouquet; perfumes so indelibly recorded on the olfactory nerves that after many years' absence from India similar smells inhaled haphazardly in an East Indian London warehouse will evoke visions of dusky natives, marble temples and banyan groves. And it is probably this foulness of atmosphere that keeps the European from these localities, for during my many rambles I see him but seldom, and the manner in which women and

children run to their balconies to see me pass tells me the appearance of an occidental is surprising and anomalous.

At sunrise the light pleasantly flashes on these gaudy Parsee dwellings four or five storeys high, lights up the innumerable window panes, the sloping eaves and the many irregularities of structure which gives to these habitats something of the look of a Chinese pagoda without the bells. Built somewhat after the style called Colombier, the stones project one over the other as in old houses at Chester, the lowermost being supported upon pillars under which a space is left which is used as a hall, a bargaining place, a sleeping apartment for the male domestics, and where the master comes out even now to see his fowls fed as they walk up the half-score steps leading up from the street. Under this recess, even so late as at six in the morning, I usually find many a servant still on his charpoy rubbing his sleepy eyes as he yawns half awake, whilst the female drudge is already busily sweeping the dust through the interstices of the wooden balustrade into the thoroughfare. The Zoroastrian chaplains go in and out to the family service, the busy house-mother bustles about the family breakfast, urchins are being dressed for the morning school, and papa puts on his official toggery. Meanwhile the sunlight flashes upon the blue, yellow, or white frontages, illumines the pillars, often coloured with gilded papers, and

shows the gold paint lying in the chamfered woodwork, sometimes daubed in hideous rings or squares of ochre and green.

And as the streets fill with many Parsees, several Babus and occasional Banias, a fine contrast is afforded between the Zoroastrian and Brahminical behaviour to the feminine sex. The Parsee woman, usually scrupulously and neatly dressed when out of doors, is scarcely ever seen toiling for hire, like her Hindu and Mussulman sisters who pass by oppressed with loads big enough for a camel. Her duties seem as purely domestic as those of most Englishwomen, and one would as little expect to see her trotting behind a heathen employer with a basket of plaintains or a piece of furniture upon the head, as to find one's own mother or sister paving the street or dragging a roller. Hindoo wives docilely step behind their husbands, the Parsees chatter and walk by the side of their better halves—if they be alone and unaccompanied by their male friends. If the fireworshipper drives, his spouse takes the back seat facing the horses almost as a matter of course, whilst the Hindoo, as soon as European eyes are off him, often turns out his wife from her seat and sits her with her back to the steeds whilst he makes himself cosy opposite her on the gorgeous silk pillows still dented by her fair shape and the kincobs embroidered with silver. Such things as a Parsee woman brings from her own father or mother's house are her own pro-

perty, over which her husband can neither exercise any control or authority, and from this she derives a happy position of independence. She is born for something more than to be a show of God's finer handiwork, to afford sensual gratification, and to beget plenteous offspring, for the Zoroastrian requires her to be his help-mate and a mother to her children. She is not so grossly ignorant as her Aryan sisters, if she is able to read she is not looked on as an immodest and unmanageable courtesan, and owing to her superior education she is better able to enter into her husband's ambitions and feelings than other native women. Thus the Parsee, in his conjugal behaviour, daily approximates to the subtle refinements existing between the European and his wife, though he has not yet acquired the common civility which makes the occidental yield up the path to a woman, to apologise if one accidentally stands in her way, and to bow when she is good enough to recognise us.

Waylay one of the urchins now just off to school, unstrap his satchel and you will find it full of English school books. Stop this spectacled student and question him as to the volumes tied with a string he is now taking to the University, and you will find they have all been edited by Saxon pedagogues. The thirst of the Parsee for western learning is comparable in its intensity to the revival of classic studies in our own Europe at the period of the Renaissance. Nearly every

Zoroastrian boy learns our tongue scarce before he can speak his own Gujerathi: he is often able to write English with facility, and if his parents are wealthy enough to permit it, he completes his education in England. He is fairly familiar with our Georgian literature, has read most of our standard novels, and has even contracted a sincere liking for Fielding, Dickens, or George Eliot. Miss Austen is not unknown to him, and her quiet and domestic descriptions appear to be more to his taste than the audacities of Becky Sharp and the boldness of the heroines of Ouida and Charlotte Bronte. A zealous reader of newspapers, magazines, and every other form of British periodical literature, *The Weekly Times*, and *The Nineteenth Century* are his *vade-mecums*. The slight knowledge of the history of the west which he possesses is gathered from his favourite Macaulay's Essays or miscellaneous abridgments used as text books. He publishes, however, on a large scale in Gujerathi and in English, and the latter performances are, as a rule, creditable to his grammatical knowledge, but more than Gallic frivolity distinguishes the leading articles of his newspapers. In his ephemeral productions he too often stoops to the vilest personalities and retails low and scandalous tales relished by the mass of the Oriental population, and more than ordinarily filthy. His intellect has something akin to the mobility of the Greeks, without any aspirations to art, for he is unimaginative, utilitarian,

and dreadfully commonplace. He affects studiousness in appearance by an immoderate use of spectacles, and his deep affection for Rogets Thesaurus supplies his conversation with more than Elizabethan euphuisms. His note paper, if not embellished by a coat of arms, is ornamented with a monogram decorated by a Latin motto in praise of industry, patience, and the money-making virtues. As tenacious of coin as the Israelite, like all other Asiatics he is inclined to estimate a man by his wealth, and not on account of his personal attainments or moral qualities. Money hides in his eyes a very vast extent of sin; and to be rich is to be above reproach and without the fear of calumny. If wealthy enough he lives in a bungalow which he calls a "Hall," and he decorates his verandah with glass balls silvered over.

Naturally of a commercial bent of mind all these thronging Sabeans are business men. Disdaining the commoner trades of butchers, bakers, laundrymen, and the meaner occupations of life, the majority are either brokers, bankers, or financial agents, but there are many clerks amongst their number. Only half-a-score of Parsees drive buggies for hire in Bombay streets, the liquor sellers are many, but the sweepers are few. I have never seen them serve as palkee-bearers or scavengers in the public thoroughfares. They make the best sutlers to our forces, and they will be found employed as caterers to the regimen-

tal mess throughout Western India. It is, indeed, said that many poor Zoroastrians engage themselves as domestics to men of their caste, but the attendants on women and children appear almost universally to be Hindu mothers and Hindu girls. As mechanics and foremen they find employment in the great local mill industries, they are also very active shopkeepers, and were formerly, before the decay of the sailing trade, the principal shipbuilders of Hindustan. It is chiefly, however, as merchants and mercantile middlemen between the European and the natives that they excel, and their connections in England, China, Malacca, and Further India are very extensive. Often have I fancied that just as the Romish priest is said to be perpetually striving after a Cardinal's hat, so these keen, sharp-witted Parsees are ever striving to acquire a fortune as large as that of Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, and the great house of Cama. But, alas ! many lack the honesty of India's first native Baronet, and the patience, probity, and steadfastness of the Sabeian London firm.

This Parsee community was formerly governed by their own Panchayet or Council, which bore several points of resemblance to the Jewish Sanhedrim. This body, composed of members of the priesthood and laity, had almost despotic powers entrusted to it by the general consent of the Jurtoosht caste, and was not at first interfered with by the British Government. They possessed the pre-

rogative of excommunicating refractory Zoroastrians, Free-thinkers, and evil-livers. They decided cases of conscience, difficult points in ritual, soothed conjugal asperities, and to them family disputes were often referred. But in lapse of time the respectability and incorruptibility of the Council deteriorated, the Judges took bribes, became split up into rival factions, and at length the decisions of the tribunal were as little heeded as the spiritual thunders of Rome in these modern days. Recourse was then had to the English Courts, who, gradually usurping the native jurisdiction, took under their ægis every jurisdiction but that of matrimony. So the Punchayet now comes to be nothing more than a body of five persons, who act merely as trustees of the funds and landed property of the Zoroastrian community of Bombay. To them is committed the care of the Cemetery or Towers of Silence, where the dead are exposed to the greed of the vulture, and the distressed find succour at the hands of their Secretary.

Throughout the morning I find the Parsee toiling at his office desk, his wife meantime superintending at home the cleansing and scouring of the many brass cooking pans and copper pots. The family dine together at noon, and after the meal each then resumes his business or domestic employment. At about three the Cotton Exchange near the Cathedral becomes densely crowded. Here, in the centre of a public thoroughfare, brokers and

merchants transact their affairs, for they have steadily refused all offers of any shelter to keep off the heat. Wealthy Bania merchants and Parsee brokers slip from their own carriages into each other's vehicles, sit for awhile in the conveyance, till the bargain is struck or refused. The poorer trader discusses his business under a coloured umbrella, chattering over files of sordid papers and sordid books, to squeeze out a pice or to secure an up-country order. English merchants also drive down in the shigram or brougham, and their agility in leaping from one vehicle into another favourably contrasts with the sloth and awkwardness of the native when exchanging carriages. Difficult is it for the occidental to counteract the cunning of the native brokers, who play into each other's hands to baffle the European, and who commit every deed of craftiness that can be practised within and without the pale of the law. The degree of calmness they preserve throughout their bargains defeats all the arts that can be opposed to it. Very many of the Hindoo merchants rejoice in that unhealthy corpulency which marks the eastern voluptuary, and seem veritable paragons of artifice. The last contract is often not finally struck before the sun sinks.

Meanwhile the shadows of evening lengthen across the streets, the glare becomes less intense, and every inanimate thing awakes as if from leaden slumber. The leaves rustle, the dust be-

gins to rise, stirred by the breeze, and the trees are vocal with murmurings. The little children come home from school, and find their way home—often accompanied by their affectionate ayahs “to protect them from thieves.” The Parsee lady, who appeared so neat and so clean in the thoroughfares this morning, and who has been spending most of the afternoon in her verandah, clad in a dirty headband and crumpled gauze shirt, begins to think herself it is time for her usual stroll. For this she dresses as carefully as our countrywomen dress for their drive in Hyde Park, her brightest gowns are taken out of the family chest, she attires her daughters and numerous daughters-in-law—who are pretty sure to be living with her—with her own hands, and carefully reviews the gaudy toilet of the little babes, and at last, satisfied with the effect she and her suite will produce, at a concerted time sets forth, accompanied by all the females of the establishment, and her nursery-maids. To dazzle the neighbours, every article of silk, lace, and satin the family own has been put on the backs of the party, the boys’ pantaloons are trimmed with gold braids, the girls’ mantles are resplendent with lovely embroideries, and even the poor relation has managed to borrow a silken hood, for a Parsee woman, however destitute, would not venture out of the house without a costly sarri. If a visit be contemplated to a relative or a wealthy friend, or if a kettledrum is in prospect, the full-dress mantle, edged with broad gold braid

or silver lace, and made of satin, covers the feminine head. Onwards they slowly go, with difficulty picking their way through the crowds of clerks sauntering forth from offices often built as sumptuously as those of London, and the best cities of the west. Vastly complacent, attracting the eye by the splendour of her ornaments and her corpulency, the house-mother waddles on in her slippers, fashioned like the mules of the creoles, with a strut like a penguin's, and significant glances to her gossiping companions, when a matrimonial nugget of their own caste crosses their path.

The many Fire Temples or Agiaries now become thronged with worshippers, and especially that of Rampart Row. This building, somewhat resembling a very large shed, has a sort of pyall or bench made of brick and mortar, extending along its solid white frontage, as is to be seen in Southern India. Here white-robed priests are reading their prayers, bright-eyed urchins, in their fathers' arms, are lazily reclining, and every species of male Zoroastrian is to be viewed. No door is closed over the entrance, and from the street one catches a glimpse of the staircase leading to the sanctuary, where the holy flame burns, as well as of coloured glass chandeliers.

Generated by electric, by natural, or mechanical means, the sacred flame leaps up, as it consumes a vast number of different substances, derived sometimes from one thousand and one, sometimes from

seven sources. The larger fires are those of Behram; but Adaram is the lesser flame, fed with less odoriferous wood. Six temples in the West of India house the Atesh Behram, one at Oodwara, another at Nausari, two at Surat, and two in Bombay, but the shrines in which the Atesh Adaram is nourished are very numerous. The descendants of the ancient Magi, when standing by the fire, wear a cloth over their mouths to prevent the flame being polluted by human breath. Meanwhile the combat of Hormuzd, the good principle with Ahriman, the evil one is fiercely waged whilst the Dastur or Bishop, the Andiaroos, and the priests or Mobeds, implore succour from Ahurumaza. The Supreme Light, which keeps up the vitality of the whole creation, animate and inanimate, the cause of all growth, wars against darkness and the devs or demons, who counter-check the endeavours of the Archangels to save the good creation. The splendour of the blazing flame, collected from so many sources, emblematic of the essence of nature, of the fluid pervading the whole earth, the origin of all splendour, puts to rout the machinations of the genii, already assailed by ten thousand prayer-readings from the Yacsna or Vendidad. As the sun declines, the devils are endeavouring to spread havoc throughout the zones of the world, and none of the heavenly spirits dare withstand and slay them whilst all the living creation are preparing for sleep. The wicked devas are girding up their loins to put

to destruction the fields, the trees, and houses of religious men, and the immortal angels have not yet spread the moonlight over the surface of the earth. May the obeisance of the devotees, their offerings of sweet oils and fruit before the sacred flame frustrate the schemes of sorcerers and charmers, and obtain the succour of the Amasaspands, the conquerors of Behram, Arbidesht, Sharwar, Khurdad, and others who preside over the various departments of nature.

The lower clergy, ignorant of the disused and obsolete tongues of Zend and Pelvi, in which their Scriptures are written, recite their prayers parrot-like, in a low tone, with observation of musical accents, and with a retentiveness of memory only equalled by the Brahman, who will repeat a Veda of thousands of verses perfectly correctly without comprehending one syllable of the Sanscrit in which it is written. The highest ecclesiastics are alone required to understand these two obsolete Iranian tongues, and so the deacons gabble about as intelligently as a Romish curé over his Latin. Gradually a whole world of Zoroastrian literature has been opened out to the Sabeian priesthood by western antiquarians and occidental philologists. Of the one hundred and twenty thousand cow-skins on which the sayings and doings of Zarathruska Zerdocht were written, only a small portion, the Vendidad, is completely preserved. The first scholar who made the Europeans acquainted with the sacred books of the

Parsees, was the celebrated savant Anquetil du Perron. The first person who laid the foundations of a real Zend philology was Eugene Burnouf, Professor of Sanscrit at the Collège de France. Whilst the honour of having first opened the treasures of the Zoroastrian Holy Writ to the occidental world belongs to France ; Germany and Denmark have to claim the merit of having further advanced inquiries in this *terra incognita*. It suffices to name Bopp, Spiegel, Westergaard, and Max Müller. Almost all the sacred books have now been translated into the vernacular Gujarathi, the modern tongue of the Parsees, so the layman may now understand, if he will, the purport of the prayers he mechanically puts up to the Good Deity.

The clerical functions are with the Parsees purely hereditary. A layman can never become a priest, though a priest may lay aside his white mitre, shave his beard, and enter into the commercial and secular life if he desires to do so. Chiefly supported by the alms of the householder to whom he officiates as domestic chaplain, the inferior clergy are not a wealthy body, nor do I imagine them to be an influential one. Zealous to preserve the integrity of their creed and jealous of outside interference no member of an alien faith may pass over the threshold of their holy fanes. Indeed, previously to recent riots it was their boast that the breath of no European had yet polluted their holy flame save that of

Anquetil du Perron in the Aigiary at Surat, but during these riots Mahommedans threw their fire vessels about in the streets of Bombay before western spectators. The whole Sabeian caste is divided into two sects who are perfectly amicable the one with the other and differ solely as to the era of their last Persian monarch and the dates for the celebration of their fasts and festivities.

I shall not be so impertinent as to follow the Parsee home either from the temple or his evening stroll. Suffice it to say his drawing-room is usually gaudy and garish, his other apartments but scantily furnished. His family will shortly come in to put off their bright clothes, and then if you peep through yonder screen you may see a Hindoo maid washing madam's feet or rocking baby Khaikosru to sleep with a ditty as old as ancient Ur of Chaldea. Daughters and daughters-in-law in the house costume of pyjamas, shirt and headbinder will shortly enjoy a match in English spelling with their sharp-witted brothers, for the spelling bee has supplanted the ancient eastern amusement of propounding and solving good riddles. Hark! is not this domestic party already engaged with puzzles in arithmetic, one child enacting the rôle of a native shroff or banker, the other dark-eyed pets his constituents.

LETTER XIII.

A PARSEE.

TUESDAY, 12TH JUNE, 1883.

BOMBAY.

I ASSURE you that your old friend Pestonjee Bomanjee remembers you perfectly well. But how altered you would find him from the humble and struggling creature you describe as having been acquainted with in England some ten years ago. His rapid rise in the social world and the very many honours recently showered upon him must indeed have changed his character.

I can scarcely believe that he ever abhorred our western civilization to the extent you mention his having once done. If he ever held the absurd prejudices you refer to, he must certainly long since have discarded them. Though still earnestly desirous of preserving the independence of his religion and all such customs of his race as have

come down to the living generation, no Parsee in Bombay is, I feel sure, more zealous to assimilate European habits and occidental ways of thought than Pestonjee Bomanjee. He is a true pioneer of the new phase of Indo-Anglian civilization, hybrid in its character, and the ultimate direction of which it is so hard to foresee.

His talk is of nothing but of things scientific and of things educational. He rattles through the ologies in a breath, and gives one to understand his eagerness for the acquisition of occidental learning is even amongst his own progressive countrymen the subject of very conspicuous remark. Nor does he disdain to deliver in his vernacular occasional lectures, plentifully adorned with quotations from English, German, and French. These discourses chiefly deal with the prospects and outlooks of modern man, female native education, and the destruction of retrogressive ideas. They are delivered in an engineering institution to the Parsee community, and according to the lecturer's own account the meetings are invariably crammed.

Nor does he stop here, for he has published grammatical exercises in Gujarathi with corresponding lessons in English, and in the preface of his "opuscula" he records his best thanks for the extreme honour the most illustrious men in India have done him in subscribing to this little work. Throughout its pages he advises the abandonment of the dead languages of the East, for the vigorous

and living literature of England, opines that Persian and Arabic primers should be left to moulder on the shelf, and that Saxon, the breadwinner of official life, is "alone worthy to hold the intellect in strict bondage." Indeed, he shows himself, like most of his countrymen, indifferent to language except as a means of preferment. The insolent phlegm of his pen, the delicious flatness and imbecility of many of his remarks, the pertinacity with which he praises himself reminds one of the petticoat pedant with her endless love of adulation. Everything in Heaven above and earth beneath is introduced in the little work. Bacon, and conic sections, are mixed up with the alphabet, the future of India prophesied in the "syntactical part."

The doctrines he thus publicly advocates he privately carries out within his home circle. Being too dotingly fond of his sons to send them away to European schools, he has engaged a capital English tutor to prepare them in science and literature for the local University. He has also elaborated a scheme for the education of these promising youths, which scheme he himself announces to be novel and replete with intense interest to all pedagogues. His grandsons all go to the native academy, otherwise Elphinstone College, which is under the supervision of English professors.

Like most Parsees he warmly advocates the female educational movement. Foremost to destroy the prejudices against it, his wife, gentle

soul, has had to fall to to her letters, and plods over bright spelling books published in London. She can already read fluently, count up to twenty, and write very fairly, and is accordingly envied by those female members of the family circle who are yet too ignorant to scrawl a note to their husbands in broken English, or to write out a list of dirty clothes sent to the wash in ornate Gujerathi. The daughters are mostly fair pianists, and the beautiful embroidered dresses they work for their children would make an English lady quite ashamed of her talents. They will sing to their children, or in the lightness of their simple hearts hum a popular tune, and are fond of exercising their voices whilst performing their ordinary domestic duties, but are yet far too modest to sing in public, for the singer in India belongs to a public body. They are excessively fond of tapestry work and do wonderful things in Berlin wools.

As you know in many Parsee households the males still continue to take their meals apart from the females. But Pestonjee, in his domestic relations, is almost European, and will not tolerate this old-fashioned usage, so all the feminine members of the family are permitted to sit down with him at table. The repast is served after the English fashion, forks are occasionally used instead of fingers, and all the other paraphernalia of a western meal are put into requisition. Unlike the Conservative class of Zoroastrians you will never catch Pestonjee eating his food from a plaintain

leaf, or with soiled fingers dipping into a common brass dish with the rest of his guests. He makes no secret of the fact that he enjoys his quiet kettledrum with his spouse more than all the festivals he eats with his chaplains and male intimates. He is, of course, not so ill-bred as to mention his wife's name in public.

His married sons and their wives live with him under his roof, and nothing rejoices him more than to gather his little grandchildren around him. He usually has some thirty-four members of his family circle within his *dulce domum*, for it is customary with Parsees that an entire family of four generations should live together. They all appear to dwell in great harmony, the infants in arms multiply very fast, and he serenely looks forward to a time when, like the first Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, he will be able to drive in an open carriage along the public roads with a dozen little ones beside him, and many more following him in other vehicles, accompanied by a squadron of ayahs. All unite in paying the greatest deference to his sweet, gentle wife, and I have no doubt the looks of love and the caresses she impartially bestows on her daughters and daughters-in-law speedily heal all family broils. Domestic quarrels among the wives of brothers or with the mother-in-law are usually the causes of dissension in Parsee households which leads to their final dismemberment, but none such are ever likely to occur under her easy and affectionate rule.

As I have already written to you, Parsee women

are usually exempted from the strict seclusion common to the Eastern feminine world, but Pestonjee's seem to possess as much liberty as our English wives and daughters. They take their drive in his handsome carriages at their own sweet wills, and they stroll together at concerted times, usually at five in the afternoon through the streets, just as they please. They are invariably busy visiting their female friends and relatives or in purchasing some jewel or embroidered gown. A pleasanter and more garrulous party than the lively little mother with four or five of her body-guard of maid servants, her grandsons, and several of her daughters and daughters-in-law it would be hard to discover. It is very beautiful to see how the little tots hang round her silken gown, or pleasantly fight as to who shall hold her gentle hand or clutch her bright bracelets. One shudders to think what a prize these little butterfly-creatures clad in satins and rich embroideries and laden with jewels, would be for the starving coolies who so enviously gaze at them as they totter along. The dress of these little children is exceedingly simple, for it is composed of one single piece of costly stuff extending from the neck to the ankles with a slit at the throat to permit of its being passed with facility over the head. This little loose shirt, the hem of which is embroidered, and the armholes of which are decorated with bullion fringes will be worn till the pet reaches seven years of age, when he will discard it to be invested with the sudra

and kusti, otherwise the sacred gown and cord. Till then he wears a sort of hussar cap embroidered with gold and silver lace in the showy manner peculiar to his country. During their sojourn in Gujerat the Parsees adopted the dress as well as the language and social customs of that province, but the male population are now being drawn into European manners and customs so very fast that we scarcely ever meet Sabeen youths decorated with necklets and bracelets and rings in one or both ears. Most of them wear trousers and frock coats of English make, and the coloured silk trousers seem to be fast becoming obsolete. On ceremonial occasions the angraka or long white gown, with enormously long sleeves wrinkled up at the elbow in innumerable pleats is invariably worn. The mitre is the general male headgear, but a round-about cap with a red centre and buff pad is frequently seen in the evening.

When Pestonjee gives occasional parties to his English and native friends the ladies of his family make a grand exhibition of silken sarris and costly gems. They have not as yet, however, been drawn into the vortex of European fashion, although they wear silk stockings from Paris and kid shoes or babooshes often studded with jewels. Like the men they are clothed in the sudra or holy netted gauze shirt and the kusti, or sacred woollen cord of seventy-two threads, engirdles their waists. These two articles of clothing are the panoply in which the Parsees believe they can successfully resist the

assaults of the evil one and the investiture takes place when a child has arrived at the age of seven years seven months and ten days. In common with their Mahommedan sisters they have adopted the wide Oriental trousers of silk, and the richly worked vest with short sleeves, which covers the chest, is precisely similar to the Hindoo choli. The white mathabana or headbinder, resembling a nun's spotless coif, completely conceals their glossy black hair and deprives them, in our eyes, of much of their beauty. With this opinion they do not, however, agree, for they consider Englishwomen lose much of their prettiness by showing their tresses. Their sarees or outer gowns are perfectly lovely, of bright-coloured silk embroidered most beautifully or fringed with the newest and richest gold lace. These superb mantles or cloaks having been folded around the waist to form a bright skirt are twisted and gracefully brought over the head, the outer end falling over the right arm. Their figures are small, their features fairly regular and they all possess the light olive complexion which, in their estimation, is the highest perfection of feminine beauty. When all drawn up in line to receive their guests they make a very goodly appearance, and their husbands may well be proud of such good-looking wives. It is needless to say that all of them are adepts in perfumery.

An Englishman's first care is the education of his children, and an old-fashioned Parsee's

their marriage. But inasmuch as Pestonjee is averse to early marriage these ladies have, for natives, been mostly married late in life. One of them was, however, betrothed before she saw this world's light, it having been arranged that if Pestonjee's wife bore him a daughter she was to be married to a certain friend's expected little boy. Mrs. Pestonjee and the other matron both did their duty, and the couple are now a very happy and pleasant pair. I may mention that Parsee women are required to give birth to their children on the ground floor of the houses they inhabit, and if they should be taken with the pains of travail at the topmost storey or in the attics they are instantly conveyed below. For forty days after their delivery the mother is kept apart from the household.

Though the Zoroastrians have adopted many customs current among the Hindoos at seasons of marriage and death independently of the courtesies of ordinary life, they are at the present time as distinct from the Aryan, Mahomedan or Christian as when they first found their way to India. So, although dressing his wife and daughters in Gujerathi costume according to the promise his ancestors gave to the Jadao Rana some thousand years back, Pestonjee forbids all other approximations to the followers of Mahomet, Brahma or Christ. He never permits them to cast flowers or cocoa-nuts into the sea on the Jasan festival in imitation of the

idolatrous customs of the native during the Devali. They may not offer cups of oil to the Hanoomun or cakes of sugar to the wide ocean, purchase holy threads, armlets and phylacteries of magicians, proceed to any Hindoo fane to perform vows, frequent the shrines of Mombadevi, Bholeshwar or Mahalaxemi, enter the haunts of Mahommedan devotees, or even gaze into the Christian cathedral. Strict monogamist himself, as all Parsees now are, he detests the conjugal polygamy of the followers of Mahomet or Rama and blesses his caste for having at length prohibited a man to marry more than one wife. He would also thoroughly dislike any law which would permit his countrymen to marry out of their race, "for a Parsee should marry a Parsee" is his unvarying dictum, and he dreads the idea of his people being absorbed by any other nation. Of the Hindoo prohibition against the remarriage of widows he expresses unmitigated disgust, and, like his fellows, is of opinion a woman should remarry as often as she wishes and has the opportunity. His behaviour to his own widowed sister is perfectly charming, and the lady enjoys every attention under his roof. The deepest sympathy is shown for her loss, and by way of comforting her the most abominably sweet tea and glutinous lollipops are reserved for her share at the evening meal. A hundred little charities are made in her name out of her brother's own funds, and as this gives her

quite an air of importance in the eyes of the world, I am not sure she grieves excessively over her forlorn state. She has worn the black sadi or mantle for a few months in token of her widowhood, her bracelets were broken when her husband died, and she will only resume her other ornament, if she should marry again. She is, however, too fond of her own children, too comfortably off, and too well cared for to make it likely she will prefer again giving her hand to another husband instead of preserving her celibacy. So great is the respect shown for her abilities that she acts as private banker to many members of the family, investing their moneys for them in Government funds, for Parsees do not usually lay out their moneys through public establishments. Her chief pride consists in a daughter who is so excessively fair that her hand was asked for in marriage before she was quite two years old. This little minx, with her glossy black hair, and sparkling eyes, and animated expression is a diminutive houri. Unlike other Parsee old maids she will never have to beg the Angel Ram for a husband, her horoscope or birth paper predicts her a happy existence, and her own Favardin or guardian angels will probably have a sinecure. Enquiries are at this moment being made as to the amiableness or otherwise of a likely youth to wed her to, and especially as to the character of his mother, for upon the latter's good qualities the happiness of little Pirozbai will largely depend.

I know that the Parsees are commonly said to care very little about learning the history of their own race, but I think you must be mistaken in attributing such indifference to Pestonjee Bommonjee. Indeed, if I am correctly informed, he frequently gathers his family around him in his verandah in the cool of the evening and gives them some inkling of the early vicissitudes of their nation. The calamities the Fire-worshippers have endured are, as you probably know, not much less tragical than those of the Jews. Driven from Persia by the followers of Mahomet, compelled to leave their country, their hearths, beaten about by the winds, buffeted by the waves, after a residence of fifteen years in the Island of Ormus these ancient Persians were finally cast on the sandy shores of India. There these descendants of Cyrus and Artaxerxes, the inheritors of the old glories of the Assyrian and Babylonian empires after consenting to adopt several Hindoo customs, at length found protection from Jadow Rana, and about A.D. 717 lighted their first sacred fire at Sangan. Years then pass without any historical mention of them, and at length they are found acting as brokers at Surat to the first Dutch, Portuguese and English factories there. Subsequently a small colony arises in Bombay which, daily developing, at the present moment threatens to engross the greater portion of the trade of Upper and Western Indian. Wherever the British rule spreads the Parsee, forgetful of the

injunctions of Zaruthrustra to cultivate the beautiful woman—the earth, and mindless that the sowing of barley and wheat is equivalent to the destruction of the bad creation, leaves the plough and the bullock team for the ledger and merchant's counter, and from an agriculturist evolves into the acutest trader of the marts of the East. His enterprise sends him journeying to Singapore, Malacca and China, his energy places him at once in contact with the white race in India, and the superior commercial ability he enjoys over the Hindoo and Mussulman, as well as his freedom from all caste restriction, gives him an enormous advantage over other natives when dealing with us. Do you not fancy you see Pestonjee's eyes sparkling with pride as he narrates much of this, and can you not imagine you hear him vaunting the nobility of a race who preferred expatriation and the fury of the elements to bowing down before the green standard of the Prophet or adoring the Kaaba. What importance must he not ascribe to the two capital virtues of his own nation, their industry and perseverance, which has enabled them to surmount these disasters.

And these triune virtues of steadfastness to creed, industry, and perseverance so eminently displayed in the lives and actions of his ancestors he himself exemplifies in his own daily life. To begin with, few men are more assiduous to rescue the Zoroastrian religion from the many corrupted and spurious Hindoo usages that have

become engrafted in it from contact with the Brahmin than Pestonjee Bomonjee. To him, as to almost every educated Parsee the sacred flame, the sun, the air, the sea are but symbols of the Deity, and he sacrifices much of his leisure and ease in persuading his more ignorant brethren to cease worshipping the elements in order to pay adoration to the Demuirge who presides over and directs them. His belief is a simple form of theism recognising but one God, the Creator of the universe, without form and invisible, an immense light from which all bounty and all goodness flows. He bitterly resents the name of Fire-worshipper, which is a thorough misnomer as applied to all but a very small class of his countrymen, and strenuously denies all pyrolatrous inclinations. He salutes the first flickerings of a flame with pious ejaculations, but only because it is the perpetual monitor to preserve the purity of his caste. Frequently he makes munificent donations to alleviate the miseries of his oppressed countrymen still resident in the kingdom of Persia, and to rescue them from the tyranny of the Mussulman unbeliever. He also yearly sets aside large sums from his income for the translation of the holy liturgical books from the Zend, or Pelvi, into Gujerathi.

Once every six months he makes a pilgrimage to Oodwara, the most ancient temple of the Zoroastrians in Hindostan, and one which is held in the highest veneration. On the sea beach of Back Bay he daily bows before the uprising sun as

it tinges the waves with a flush of red colour. Callous to the scoffing of strangers, he continues repeating rapid prayers, prostrating himself upon the sand and exhibiting every sign of outward devotion until the orb has risen well out of the ocean. Then he fills his little brass vessel with the sacred salt water, and walks homewards, reading his liturgical psalms. Throughout the day he puts up the five gathas, or orisons, which are devoted to the several angels who preside over the five parts into which day and night are divided by the Zerdusthians. Whether he makes use of the great purification ceremony by rinsing the mouth and anointing the eyes and tips of the ears with the urine of the cow, or "gomez," as many Parsees do, I know not. He is, however, very scrupulous about putting out a flame or a fire in any form, and would on no account use firearms, and has shown himself reluctant to assist the fire brigade. Parsees are said not to take their women to any locality where there is neither Atesh Behram or Tower of Silence, but if such a usage does exist Pestonjee does not observe it. His religion teaches him to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, and most thoroughly does he do this, for he is an untiring worker.

Indeed I will allow you that the warlike spirit which distinguished "the fearless, the valiant, and the athletic Parsees," or Gabars, of former ages has degenerated with Pestonjee, as with most of his countrymen, into an ignoble pursuit of wealth, an

incessant craving for money. In every enterprise where riches are to be acquired he is to be found working for the one grand object of his existence, the acquisition of silver rupees. It would be difficult to mention any commercial business carried on in Bombay in which he is not directly or indirectly interested, or in which he does not possess a share. He is probably one of the largest millowners, and was one of the first to promote the introduction of European machines and inventions into the country. I think this praiseworthy industrial spirit makes partial amends for his greed.

I also own his loyalty is a little too noisy, and the manner in which he persists on every public occasion in proposing her Majesty's health and eulogising her rule is, to be sure, a bit of a nuisance. I perfectly agree that to send native fruits of his own growing to Buckingham Palace was somewhat impertinent. I am rather tired also of hearing that he can trace an ancestry as remote as that of the Dady Shets, the oldest Parsee Bombay family, for, as you know, that does not go beyond seven generations. The story of the lacquered palanquin he obtained from the Thakur of Navra, whose financier he is, and which gift is a high honour from native chieftains, I have repeatedly heard. His gush about our wonderful nation, our troops, our political capacities does not strike one as altogether sincere. He, however, supplied us with funds during the Mutiny, and avers he would

have been prepared to wield a sword in our cause. His political interests happen to be ours, for were British rule to cease within India the Parsees are fully aware they would be destined by Mussulmans and Hindoos to massacre or a second expatriation. Notwithstanding the enmity secretly rankling between these three races they embrace, salaam, praise each other, and utter high sounding terms of adulation and courtesy with all that attention to etiquette for which all Orientals are remarkable.

Thus have I feebly attempted to give you a sketch of an ordinary well-to-do Parsee merchant. I am prepared to admit he is a bit of a Monsieur Jourdain, very fresh as yet to our civilization, and often ridiculous in his adaptations to it. His house is too gaudy, too full of gimcracks, glitter, and glare. His reception rooms are furnished with a collection more heterogeneous even than that of the Eastern-Anglo maniac, and his delight is to have his apartments one blaze of light from chandeliers and innumerable lamps. His craving for education is at best, I fear, the display of conceit and egotism under the pretence of knowledge, pre-eminently European. His brain is filled with windy self-importance, his attainments are ostentatiously paraded, and his public addresses would team with salient absurdities were they not revised by his English solicitors. His charities are too often made with a worldly purpose, and pure benevolence is, I fear, seldom the only motive that actuates him in making the large contributions

the Parsees give to charitable funds on the death of a near relative. He still consults astrologers on the birth of his children, as to the influence the stars will exert over them during their lives, and it is whispered that he believes in sagdid, or dog-gaze, which is the ceremony of bringing a dog to look on a dead body with a view of obtaining knowledge of the fate of the departed spirit. He is superstitious about the paring of nails, the cutting of hair, and performs ablutions for the expulsion of devils. Still, with all these infirmities, I fancy that amongst the many Parsees who are destined to be exposed to the greed of the vulture few will be more regretted than Pestonjee Bomonjee.

LETTER XIV.

AN HOTEL.

WEDNESDAY, 13TH JUNE, 1883.

BOMBAY.

WITHIN the district of the Fort, with the sea at its back, the High Court and Government offices to the east, Rampart Row to the north, the Esplanade to the west, stands an hotel so large as to be comparable only to those huge edifices our American cousins build in their native land. Five-storied, encircled by verandahs and balconies, flat-roofed, it almost looks as if it might lodge an infantry battalion within its ample iron sides, and by its bulk dwarfs into insignificance the extensive abodes of the Hindu and Parsee which often harbour some four-score or more human souls. Several hundreds of doors, which play the double part of windows and entrances to the numerous apartments, are protected by several hundreds of

latticed shutters, running on castors upon iron rails, and called "jilmils." Five flights of steps lead up to the summit from a floor tessellated with English tiles, and no less than ten punkahs sway in a dining-room sufficiently large to seat one to two hundred guests.

But with the quality of the refreshment and lodging provided for the traveller I shall have nothing to do, for I have little ambition to earn the reputation of tout or of a sly advertiser. Let it, therefore, suffice, that I have selected this spot as an observatory from which I may write you a little note about the manners and life of the Anglo-Indian and of his subordinates better than in any other caravansera.

At about six in the morning the large edifice awakes to life, light, and echoing sound. Its many floors and its passages are then thronged with private male servants, who rejoice in the common appellation of "boys," and who come to wait on their masters and mistresses. However old, however white-headed and infirm these domestics may be, this juvenile title is invariably applied to them by the "Sahib." Few masters know the names of their servants, and even when they do the prodigious length of many Hindoo names is far too inconvenient to substitute them for the terse appellation of boy.

With a cup of tea in one hand and a platter of bread-and-butter in the other the servitor makes his entrance into his master's room, to find that

worthy probably restlessly sleeping under the white and tightly-drawn mosquito curtains. Having deposited the refreshment conveniently near the bedside, the domestic commences to awaken the sleeper in a thoroughly characteristic Hindu style by repeating the word "Sahib" in one monotonous tone as if he were calling on some popular deity. At length the invoked one turns around, awakes, eats his early breakfast, or "chota hazri," with probably but little appetite, falls back on his pillow, and calls for a barber.

So many manipulators of the razor have been sitting tailor-fashion for the last half-hour in the passages that the servant finds himself embarrassed by the difficulty of making a choice from their number. If he fails to find a relative he will pitch on a friend, or, failing that, he secures a barber from whom he can secure a trifling commission. But if a nephew, distant cousin, or grandson can possibly be obtained the strong nepotism and system of family patronage that runs through all ranks and classes of Hindoos at once determines the election.

Clad in a scarlet turban slashed with gold lace, wearing a white tunic tied around the waist with a cummerbund, with the caste-mark freshly impressed on his brow, after leaving his pointed shoes at the door, Figaro enters the chamber with a salaam. His skill is so great, his hand is so sure that he will shave you without awaking you, and it little signifies in what position you may

choose to lie in bed, for he gets at your chin and effectually frees it from hair. It is not unusual to find the first experiences in his training have been acquired by shaving the lips and scalps of his own countrymen, and only those persons who know the manifold different ways in which the Hindoos shave the head to denote caste, and are aware of their solicitude to free the body from hair, can have any idea how vast this experience must be. I have often bitterly regretted the long, supple, delicate fingers promenading over my face should have been employed in this underling work instead of in the surgical operations they seem so well fitted for.

Proud both of his trade and of the little English he knows, I have usually found our Aryan barber somewhat amusing. If a fire has recently happened in the native town he will certainly know it, if an Englishwoman has eloped or a countryman shot himself he will duly chronicle the event. His opinion of the Europeans he shaves are often risible in the extreme, and quite uninfluenced by the couple of rupees or more he monthly receives. But I could never yet discover in his placid appearance anything denotive of drollery or of the heartiness and humour ascribed to him by Eastern legends and our home writers.

Meanwhile the chin has been shaved, the hair cut and trimmed, and after putting up his razors in a case he wears on his waist belt, Figaro takes up his umbrella, grasps his little tin pannikin full

of suds, picks up his brush, and with another salaam departs to his next customer.

The Sahib having quickly dressed himself, with the aid of his boy, in his white linen clothes, now issues forth for his morning walk, wearing the sol-tope or sunhat of various shape. The youth, just fresh out from home, who believes that walking at a terrific rate can alone avert a liver complaint, bustles forth at a pace horrible to look on. Older residents in the East funereally step along, cogitative as Brahmins, indolent as Hindoo women sunning themselves on a ghât. With the languid pity of an Oriental voluptuary they behold tennis players just going off to the Bombay Gymkhana or recreation ground to win their spurs at Badmington, or play the ties for the cup. More elderly fogies enter the reading-room to pore over the *Indian Times* or *Bombay Gazette* and indulge in conversation interlarded with native words about mercantile speculations or military shop. English-women start off to do a bit of shopping or marketing in the native town, wearing depressed helmets adorned with gauze veils. Ayahs by the side of the bearers awkwardly clamber down the broad staircases as they take out baby for his constitutional. The passages are filled with men in shirt and pyjamas going towards the bath-rooms, preceded by servants carrying manifold towels and enormous sponges. Shouts for whiskey and soda tells one that many of the inmates are suffering from the headaches brought on by last night's

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jovial dinners. A travelling Borah arrives with his stores of silver and Cutch work, and his silken stuffs, which are soon displayed all over the largest verandah. There are sandalwood boxes, satins of different kinds, a few shawls, and Indian knick-knacks, upon which many an envious eye will be cast throughout the day. A few minutes later and the pipe of the juggler resounds, stirring the languid curiosity of a few children on the balconies. For clothing the conjuror wears the common dhotie-cloth around the loins, a scanty rag across the shoulders, and he plays a flageolet made of a gourd in one reedy monotonous treble. This ancient psylli is accompanied by a boy carrying two cobras and leading a monkey, and an elderly man follows behind with a basket, a chameleon, and a rusty tulwar.

At the summons of the first breakfast bell everyone returns from his constitutional to the hotel, and at the second tinkle we all sit down to the first regular meal of the day. Fish, beef, mutton, eggs, curry, and fruit are alternately brought to us, tea and iced water constituting the prevalent beverage. The hotel servants are all Indo-Portuguese, or Eurasians imported from Surat or Goa; often illegitimate sons of Europeans by native or half-caste women. Less intelligent than the Hindoo, I cannot understand why a preference should be shown by Englishmen in Bombay for their services, unless the similarity of costume, religion, and occidental manners turns the scale in their favour.

Surprised as the newcomer is to find almost every race of the East in a street in Bombay, he opens his eyes far wider when he also discovers this is the case around the breakfast table. Masters and mistresses travelling from up country usually bring their domestics to wait upon them during the journey, and among these servitors one might possibly find a representative of each of the ethnic races of India. The remarkable difference of their colour and stature, as well as of their physical conformation, are forced upon the notice of the most inattentive spectator. Yonder the dark Madrasee, with his predilection for gay stuffs, has dressed himself out with a voluminous turban trimmed with gold thread, and he wears a bright overcoat of brilliant red cloth. Further on an olive-coloured Mussulman stands with his hands crossed over his breast, the incarnation of fanaticism and attenuation. Soonees, in ready-made-up turbans, bustle about in cummerbunds of every hue, fighting over the dishes for their different masters. The taciturn Rajput, true Highlander of the East, moves as if he were still on parade, ordering others dictatorially hither and thither, and this child of the sun and descendant of kings shrinks from the touch of the helot castes as a thing to be scrupulously avoided. Berar, Orissa, the Punjaub, has each its contingent here, and even Cashmere has sent us its wild specimen, lifting up for us a corner of the veil which hides us from the primitive condition

of mankind. From the fact of their speaking mutually unintelligible languages, the members of these various races are unable to fraternise; but imagine the polyglot discourse, the Babel of tongues to be heard between conversational masters and their servants. Hindi, Gujerathi, Coorgi, Tamil, and the sweet sonant Telagu, the Italian of the East, are alternately caught by the ear. Fourteen of the twenty-one distinct languages of India are now being spoken, for in Hindoostan there is a language for every province, a dialect for every zillah.

The master's accents are seldom mellifluous as he addresses his boy, for kept in a latent state of terrible irritation by the heat, the slightest thing suffices to kindle him to blazing wrath. Young men just new to the country are especially brutal; but the thrashed or kicked servant is not slow to revenge himself for unkindly behaviour by suing the offender in a civil court or dragging him before the Presidency Magistrate. The mass of our countrymen are, however, thoroughly humane in the treatment of their inferiors, and I am assured no civilian of any long standing out here ever degrades himself by thrashing his "nigger" with horsewhip or rattan cane. Personally I have never yet seen beef thrust down a Hindoo's throat as a practical joke to make him lose caste, nor have I witnessed a Mussulman compelled to eat pork by a too jovial mess. Beyond the customary injunction that no servant shall appear in his master's presence with the brow daubed with red or with

garments stained with the purple powder used at the Holi, I believe Anglo-Indians do not interfere with the religion of their dependants, for whose conversion to Christianity they, as a rule, evince not a particle of solicitude. Similar indifference is displayed by our countrywomen towards their ayahs as regards their Pagan creed or country dress, and no enquiries are ever made as to their followers unless some overt act of immorality is committed by them.

The extent to which contempt for women is engrained in the Oriental character is not more vividly shown than by contrasting the care a servant takes for his master's comfort, and the comparative impudence and neglect he shows to his master's wife. If the Sahib be not by, his better half will have to ask for the same thing repeatedly ere she gets it, her tea will stand a fair chance of being sugarless, her water un-iced. If she scolds, the boy will take every opportunity of showing his contempt for her by smoking under her window, and coming into her presence under the effects of prepotent bhang. Amongst our national oddities none appears more extraordinary to the native than our solicitude for the welfare of our wives and our daughters. How ladies get on at Indian hotels, unless it be by constant tipping, I cannot imagine.

And assuredly if the servants form a gallery of ethnography, their masters and mistresses compose a pathological museum. With the exception of a few roses on the cheeks of new importations

from home, every face is bloodless as that of a corpse. Victims to dysentery, fever, and cholera, martyrs to liver and the many ills the flesh is heir to in India, anxiously here await the next mail to take them thence. As the day approaches the old bright light comes back to the cheerless eyes, the man becomes quickly transformed, he no longer measures his food by ounces, his drinking by gills, but eats and fares copiously. I have myself seen young subalterns and even old colonels on sick leave, become so excited at the idea of leaving this "infernal country" to see English hamlets and harvest fields, as to appear as if intoxicated with joy. What happiness to leave a country "where one too often eats without gratification, where the best wine is insipid, in which one reads without reflection, talks without animation, where actions are prompted by habit, not choice, where life is neither painful nor pleasant, and where one's walk is always an objectless constitutional." For the white man or his offspring there is no such thing as acclimatisation in Hindostan, the longer he remains in it the more he feels the effect of the sun and the depressing *ennui* engendered by the ungenial climate and monotony of its life. So he gleefully bids adieu to its shores and returns to his native land to attend Indian debates in Parliament not too well attended by English members, to become the universal attraction of managing mammas with unmarried daughters, and the dupe of every Continental hotel servant. At home they

find him a bore with his ideas of despotic government, and his absence from Europe and the infection of Eastern civilization makes him take such a loose view of things, that he is voted "immoral."

After breakfast a general brushing of clothes and tidying of untidy rooms is performed by every servant, and the task is no light one, for habits of order are not to be attained to by any European in the East, and he throws his things all over his floor. Then, later on, the Sahib comes up to his chamber to correspond with his banker or friends, his wife sleeps or reads till tiffin time comes, her ayah mounting guard at her door. In the afternoon, when the sun sinks, there is shopping, business or sight-seeing to while away the evening hours, the cathedral service or the band-stand. Dinner is often eaten to the strains of an itinerant German band; billiards, pegs, or an evening drive bring one to bedtime. And as one goes to one's repose along the passages, many "a boy" may be seen snoozing quite close to his master's room, wrapped up in a sheet and lying on a thin mattress, his personal baggage near his head, his water-pots at his feet. Around him are buffalo horns, elk antlers, and polo sticks, heaped upon cabin furniture with mysterious screws, and all labelled "*Vid Brindisi*."

Unless harassed by the heat, the tinkle of passing tramways, or the rush of water into the hotel for the morning bath, one soon falls off to sleep.

LETTER XV.

AN HOTEL VERANDAH.

14TH JUNE, 1883.

BOMBAY.

THIS hotel verandah is quite crowded this morning with Anglo-Indians returning home by the very next troopship. A perfect host of little boys and little girls are now running up and down the matted and tessellated floor to the dismay of dusky bearers and gaudily dressed ayahs. Several jaunty subalterns, in secluded corners, are endeavouring to make themselves agreeable to a couple of garrison hacks who, having failed "to go off" in the Oriental matrimonial market, like damaged goods, are about to find their way back to the place of their export. Behind a rosy red screen a bright-eyed little widow, seated between a portly archdeacon and the recently divorced wife of a brigadier alternately babbles religion or

scandal. To the amusement of the many other ladies present, a stern British matron suddenly ceases to castigate her numerous offspring to turn the vials of her feminine wrath upon the devoted head of a very weak husband who is imagined to have a sneaking kindness for a passably pretty governess now engaged in softly reading French to her hot and indocile pupil. Do but picture this scene to yourself, with its concomitant gossip, romping, and noise, and then fancy that with me you are looking down into the blazing hot street.

Carrying bright brass pots, bundles of linen, or wickerwork baskets upon the head, a swarm of Hindu women swiftly pass by, bound on their daily work. Dressed in vests partially open in front, but tightly fitting over the shoulders and bosom, wearing loin cloths which do not meet the upper garment, but leave a brown strip of flesh visible about the navel, with mantles of gay colour thrown over head and shoulders and which scarce conceal the erect and natty figure, the brown legs bare to the knee, the arms uncovered to the elbow, they patter past with a mighty jingling of jewels and toe-rings, looking like brilliant wasps in their multi-coloured attire. Most of them will be employed in displacing earth for the purposes of a new Government building, and will have to bring up the soil excavated for the proposed foundations. The severest labour is ever assigned them, the most repulsive tasks fall to their lot, for are they not Oriental women, and as such little better than

slaves. They draw water at the well, they work in the fields, rotate the millstone and pestle, bear merchandise to the early bazaar, like coolies toil under timber, mortar and lime, and after brushing the leaves from the Englishman's compound they often empty the slops. As they walk they pick up the cowdung left on the road, roll it into soft balls and fling it into the basket or pot, to burn it hereafter as fuel, or to paint the lintels of their poor hovels with it as their religion ordains. The seemingly do-nothing husbands stroll on before, carelessly sauntering, and reckless as seigneurs in their dirty, scanty white garments and filthy headgear.

But hard though the life be, and poor the pay, the plain faces of these feminine drudges wear as a rule a contented expression. They do not apparently feel their degradation, nor are they aware of their abnormal abasement. Indeed the little religion taught them inculcates uncomplaining submission to the burdens that indolent man may choose to lay upon them. Doomed to a life of subordination, in childhood they have learnt to be dependent on the house-father, in youth on their husbands, if widows on their sons, if they have no sons on their deceased husband's nearest kinsman, in default of these on the kinsmen of their own fathers. Never must a Hindoo woman seek independence, always must she be held in bondage by her masculine protectors. "The beauty of a cocil is his song," the beauty

of a woman is in willing obedience to her lord or natural guardians.

Suppose anyone of the idle vanguard of men to be choleric and dissipated, a drunkard, a gambler, a debauchee, old, ugly, and leprous, reckless of domestic affairs, incurably vile, never must his wife regard him but as her guru, her darling, religion and god. When in his presence let her not look aside, but keep her eyes on him, that she may be ever ready to receive his commands. He may threaten her, he may unjustly beat her, but under no circumstances may she make any return for insult or cruel blows, but meek and soft words. At his call she must give up all that is most dear to her, the bracelets he has placed on her arms, the one cotton garment twenty cubits in length, he permits her to wear to cover her nakedness. Though he have other wives she must be rather an affectionate handmaid to them than a rival, must supply them with her own apparel and food, even bathe and perfume them to exhilarate the lust of her lord, and submit to their acrimonious correction. She is also admonished to prepare her spouse's meal with her own hands, to wait on him while he eats, and after him take her own food. In the hour of necessity she must cherish him as a mother cherishes her only son, in times of hilarity she is to be to him a courtesan, she must ever regard him as of a superior order of beings. Let her mind be subject to his, her words consentient to his speech, her life fused

into his. She listens to his words as a child in Europe listens to his parents, she adopts his views, and embraces his opinions with an unhesitating confidence that bespeaks her implicit faith in her custodian and jailer. Constantly engaged in discharging her domestic duties, such as sweeping the house, cleaning the cooking utensils or preparing the dinner, or otherwise employed in earning money for the household, these easy duties to be learned without any assistance of knowledge are nevertheless so heavy that they scarcely leave her at leisure to think. But why should she think? Do not the shastras inculcate the general degradation of woman, are not the customs of Hindoo society violently hostile to the cultivation of her intellect, and is not custom the breath of the nostrils of the Hindoo? From time immemorial the advantages of learning have been denied her, ages have elapsed and few males have ever yet felt the want of the education of females, it is only temple dancers who learn to read. By the help of knowledge she would become really an intelligent creature, she would listen with pleasure to the conversation of men, become acquainted with those things which are not proper for a woman to hear, or read books which would make on her mind an impression inimical to her morals. As she increased in wisdom she would employ all kinds of schemes for associating with those who might suit her taste, by carrying on secret correspondence, she would endanger the purity of the

hearth; are not falsehood cruelty, bewitchery, folly, covetousness, impurity, and unmercifulness her inseparable faults? Once educated she would rule her lord instead of being ruled by him, she would be assigning reasons for everything she did, disobedience and discontent would pervade her family, and her poor husband would remain unnoticed in society. But keep her from knowing anything besides her domestic concerns, preserve her in ignorance of the world and its fashions and you will find her a quiet, simple creature, easily manageable, and obedient to her husband, priests, and superiors. When a girl is born there is shame within and silence without, and no congratulations either among friends or relatives; religion has united with civil law and custom in effecting her humiliation, she has been ignorant for ages, let her remain so. It is enough for her if she honour her husband, and even though she forget God in her conjugal bondage, she shall be held worthy, for the good wife who honours her lord honours her God, and thus serves the Deity without being aware of it. This and much more to the same effect will you find in the books of the Hindoos, and in current literature, and it is the popular opinion among Aryan husbands to this day.

But as these serfs fade from my view, they likewise fade from my thoughts. Bounding like roes, almost naked, with a single cloth round the loins, a band of small girls quickly step past, making

their way to a cotton mill quite close at hand. In their hair they wear a few flowers, in their ears a blue bead or two, and in their hands they carry a plaintain for tiffin and dinner. Between the ages of eight or ten years the majority of them have probably been betrothed since their third year and these will probably be given in marriage immediately after their twelfth anniversary. As to read or to write might fill them with pride, impair their docility, and unfit them for the management of the household they are mostly as ignorant as when they were born. Neither do they know how to sew, for their parents have no wish to make "dirzees" or tailors of them, nor can they count, "for who wants to make money changers or clerks of little girls." Their religion is summarised in one short prayer which since four years old they have addressed to Siva or Yama for a handsome husband who shall have riches and length of days, dearly love his wife, and never marry a second whilst the first is still living. The formula ends with an earnest petition to the Divinity to preserve them from terrible widowhood.

But alas! it is but too possible that Siva or Yama have paid little heed to the prayers of their infant devotees, and I do not doubt that several of these little girls, although not yet in their teens, are already forlorn widows. From the day of her betrothal, a Hindoo child is considered as wedded, and should she lose her spouse before the marriage is finally consummated, she is vowed to as austere

and continent a life as if she had entered the nuptial bed at twelve years of age and cohabited in her husband's hut. Probably many widowed dots have seen their deceased husbands but once, on the day of espousal; but henceforth the sacred institutions of the Hindoos prohibits their re-marriage, and exacts absolute chastity of them at the peril of forfeiting the little exclusive property they may have, as well as the right to maintenance from their legal protectors. This restriction imposed on the female, while none of a similar character is imposed on the male, is explained by the Hindu on the ground that were women permitted to re-marry they might be tempted to poison or make away with their husbands when they disliked them in order to get new ones, and in any event they would divulge family secrets. Against so monstrous a custom, English legislative enactments and individual efforts have been unceasingly directed, but the re-marriage of a widow of high caste is still considered sufficiently startling to deserve a special telegram in the morning Indian newspapers. She who is twice wedded, who twice takes the sepatati or seven steps, corresponding to our "I will," of course loses the esteem of all her respectable countrymen and countrywomen, and even her husband becomes the object of odium; but her property is retained to her by a special act, and she does not now forfeit it according to Brahminical law. If she remain a widow she lives despised and contemned, possibly falls into

adultery, and in the latter event forfeits her every belonging to those who discover her. But if her husband died wealthy, his riches often give her great consequence ; she brings up his children, administers his fortune, and issues her orders to her clerks and attorneys from behind the silken curtain of her zenana. Ranees, Begums, and great princesses, who have never been outside their palaces and gardens, thus rule great territories in India to this day, in right of their infant sons ; and the dominions they govern are better administered usually than those of native chieftains. Many a widow in Bombay manages large mercantile establishments from the seclusion of her private chamber with the skill with which the best financiers control their public affairs.

That the British Government were imperatively bound by every law, human and divine, to suppress suttee cannot for one moment be doubted. But that the Hindoo widow has gained much happiness by our zeal for her preservation is still a moot point. Formerly she ended her life in the flames amidst the vociferous encomiums of her parents, her children, her priests ; now she lives, too often merely to be scorned and despised. In bridal array, her face unveiled, her entire body perfumed, wearing garlands of flowers, dressed in rich yellow silks, sitting on the funeral pyre, embracing the corpse, the fire flashed up, the smoke slowly rose, and perhaps the living victim, often drugged with camphor, opium, and bhang to

sustain her courage, felt but little anguish as she heard her heroism loudly extolled. The knowledge that by incrimination she not only avoided a life of insult and shame, obtained Heaven's remission for her husband's direst sins, and secured her own admission into Indra's fair paradise, but the certainty that by her death she secured the salvation of seven generations of his family, and for ever set herself free from the possibility of living again in the body of a female animal, must have assuaged her anguish and pain very considerably. 'Tis indeed true that there were numbers of women who evinced a longing for life and failed to find courage to apply the averted torch to the pile, or have leaped from the rolling flame to be cut down, disabled, or bound by their sons or their near relatives and thrown back upon the blazing pyre. But such cases were few as compared with the total amount of victims who endured death with serenity, without a sigh or a tear, influenced by deep religious conviction, the admonition of friends, true conjugal devotion and a deeply-seated feeling that the honour of their family depended on their martyrdom. If they lacked the courage to set the timber on fire, they bade their nearest kinsman, or even their own sons, to do it; and passionately invoking with every endearing expression the corpse by their side, they prepared to rejoin it in the vast world of shades. Preferring to be the heroines of an hour than to lead lives of joyless servitude,

amidst the deafening noise of tom-toms and the cries of Haribol of an excited throng, they saw themselves worshipped with almost Divine honours; the rose-coloured powder they had thrown around them, and the betel leaf they had scattered, were picked up to be cherished as sacred relics. Thus the suttee yielded her life amidst the hosanna and exultations of her children and kin; now the widow lives on as one of the dregs and outcasts of humanity. She is forced to have her hair shaved that she may wear an ugly appearance, and thereby more effectually repel the seductions of profligate men. Bereft of her jewels, feeding but once a day on the coarsest of fare; unperfumed, she tells the beads of the chaplet for the rest of her soul. Happy is she if she may carry her husband's ashes to Benares; fortunate is she if she may behold that ideal seat of blessedness—which Hindoos long to visit as a Moham-medan longs to visit Mecca, or the Christian enthusiast to see Jerusalem—and there scatter his dust on the sacred waters. Having gratified her desire, she will leave the memory of her pious enterprise to her daughters for their example, and to incite them to undertake the same pilgrimage should they too be left widows.

But as the breakfast bell is now ringing, I must leave these Hindoo women and girls to wend their own ways without further gossip of mine. Contrast their state of submission, degradation, and ignorance with the pronounced independence and

education of the European ladies on this verandah, still scolding, flirting, and romping. Objectionable as several of our Anglo-Indian countrywomen undoubtedly are, with their lax morals and loose tongues, their condition is, perhaps, more to be envied than that of their darker and enslaved sisters. What materials here for a good argument for and against "women's rights"—too much *sans gêne* on this balcony and too little below. Georges Sand, John Stuart Mill, and Mrs. Weldon *versus* Brahma, Mahomet and Kalidasa.

But do not let me lead you to think that submission is the invariable condition of the Hindoo female. "There are no shrews, no termagants amongst our women," writes a native author who, I fear, is either singularly inobservant or more than ordinarily mendacious. Artful woman, rising triumphant over the injunctions of the Shatras and sacred inculcations depreciatory of her sex, will be found here, as elsewhere, to coil themselves around the affections of their despot till the positions are reversed, and the domestic autocrat becomes the slave. The virago's tongue is not to be silenced by all the condemnatory verses of the Vedas, or her behaviour directed by the example of docile women; and both in her home and in the public streets, the scold may be heard soundly rating her henpecked lord. She pouts, she fumes, she even hisses; she will stop dead short in her walk, lean on the very first wall she comes to by the roadside, and there,

like a sulky child, will remain, with her back turned to her husband, until she gets her desire. If wealthy, directly she gets out of temper she threatens to destroy herself with opium, refuses to eat, or is for lodging complaints against her better half before the tribunal of her own affectionate parents. These little tricks are her sole defences against a too arbitrary authority; alas ! for those who are too modest or too gentle to make use of them. From these poor victims we receive, through our Zenana-Mission-ladies, doleful elegies on the Aryan matrimonial system.

LETTER XVI.

A SOLICITOR'S OFFICE.

FRIDAY, 15TH JUNE, 1883.

BOMBAY.

THE hamals are lazily seated on the office steps as Ronald arrives at his office about ten in the morning. These creatures pull the punkah, carry the palanquins, and hail the Sahib's dog-cart or his brougham whenever he wants them. They wear livery which, in the present case, consists of a dark sort of frock coat, relieved by bands of red braid around the collar and sleeves. A red cummerbund is tied around the waist and a vivid scarlet turban decorates their unintelligent heads. Sepoys who command these underlings wear a greater profusion of braid over the chest, on the back, and on the folds of the turban. Their sleeves are often striped with good conduct marks, or the gold braided stripes of the ser-

geant or corporal, an old fashion retained by the native tailor from the byegone days of John Company Bahadur. But the office butler is the grandest of all, and he has slipped a pair of spotless white trousers over his very black legs. All these menials walk about bare-footed, for it would be regarded as heinously disrespectful did they enter a European room in sandals or shoes.

As Ronald walks up the steps, these hamals rise indolently to their feet, and salaam with the hand raised to the brow and the body bent. These obeisances invariably increase or decrease according to the quality of the clothes Ronald wears, and according to whether he arrives in a carriage or on foot. The Sepoys and the butler repeat the Eastern salutation deferentially, and bow obsequiously low. The Portuguese clerks stand at attention, and timidly venture on a "Good-morning, sir." Meanwhile Ronald has found his way to his room, and the punkah commences to sway as the hamal pulls it from the outside.

The office consists of one very extensive room, which runs over the ground floor of some dozen warehouses. This very large room is split up into divisions for the partners, the cashier, the head clerks and their many subordinates; altogether some thirty souls in number. The partners' rooms are partitioned off from the rest of the building with screens of well whitewashed wood, and they are entered by doors resembling some-

what scarlet fire screens. Tables, chairs, desks, pens, ink, and paper are all of European manufacture, and were it not for the many open casements over which tatties sway it would be possible to imagine one's self in a London house of legal business. The compartments allotted to the native managing clerks are less comfortably furnished than those occupied by their masters; the punkah is not provided for them, but when heated they fan themselves with fans of palm leaf. Their inferiors sit altogether in the centre of the apartment.

The office staff, like almost every other in Bombay, is composed of one or two European assistants, several Parsees, numerous Hindoos, Eurasians, or Portuguese, and perhaps a Mahomedan. These miscellaneous races, on the whole, work fairly harmoniously together, and when quarrelling the Fire-worshipper is usually found to be at the bottom of the shrill-voiced discord. For one Oriental to call another a rascal, a cheat, a liar, would neither lessen the insulted one in his own opinion nor in that of society, so in order to stir him to wrath his mother, sisters, and daughters are grossly abused, an injury he resents by similar vituperation. With the exception of the European, the Zoroastrian is by far the most intelligent and active clerk, and he always seems far busier than he is. The Portuguese vie in stupidity with the Eurasians, and this wretched race, deteriorated beyond re-

demption by intermarriage with native Christian converts, are in religion and manners painfully Orientalized. The once famous names of De Gama, De Castro, and De Sousa are borne by these wretched half-caste quill drivers, who are blacker even than the low populace of the worst quarters of the native town. They possess fine Christian names and rejoice in Pedro, Alfonso, and Guilherme, and the "de"—the prefix of nobility. The Hindoo is able and intelligent, but over finical and fond of enshrouding the matters he has to do with in mystery. Mahomedans are incomparably lazy, slovenly, and totally callous to all remonstrances, whether of a kindly or unkindly nature. They have even less sense of shame in the matter of laziness than the other races, and if kept to their tasks they consider themselves most horribly dealt with. Menaces and threats of dismissal they receive with every mark of politeness.

The Aryan and Sabeian have a natural aptitude for the law, and the managing Hindoo and Parsee clerks would put to shame many of our best solicitors. They rejoice in the intricacies of the dismal profession, its glorious uncertainties, its problematical points. Their memories are extraordinarily retentive, their imagination sterile, and they are, therefore, perfectly adapted to pore over dusty reports, and to collate bulky digests. Their own systems of adoption, inheritance, and ceremonial observances have naturally predisposed

their brains from an early age to find a congenial exercise amidst the refinements of one of the most involved systems of property-law the world has yet seen. Institutions as elaborate as any recorded in history, a singular and complicated social organization, whose habits and ways of thought are so dissimilar to ours, can alone be comprehended by the Hindoo. He alone can initiate the occidental in the mighty maze of caste, inform him how much of the nearly obsolete laws of Menu are still applicable in this present age, and by what Hindoo school of law the dealings of such and such clients should be regulated. The Parsee becomes the natural exponent of his complicated system of religious bequests, an authority on the religious custom of the Jurtoosht sect, and an adviser as regards the financial management of his charities and fire-temples. Unfortunately both of these clerks see far too much ahead of them, and descend to such irrelevant minutiae as makes much of their work impractical to carry out if not totally useless.

After patient and long-continued examination of the documents they prepare, one is well-nigh baffled in the attempt to discover what is fiction and what is fact, and their minutiose and microscopic intellects are lost in detail, and seem incapable to seize generalities. Under the guidance of precedents their minds lose their individuality, their literary conservatism is carried to excess, and they resemble machines which always

execute the same round of motions and throw off uniformly the same results. It may, perhaps, be pure fancy, but I think that in the documents they draw up one sometimes detects the spirit of the ancient Indian legislators which would limit and prescribe stringent rules for the most insignificant acts of human life. But nothing interests the managing clerk more than a well-fought case, and he really looks like an incarnation of litigiousness as he straddles about with his weighty bundles of papers. His letters are often written in capital English, his mistakes in spelling rare, and he speaks our language with surprising fluency and great correctness of accent. His manners are courteous, he has little of the coarseness of feeling common to the English lower classes, and he is often a member of some influential family possessing lakhs of rupees and living as economically as if they had but a hundred shillings a month. In intellect and in politeness he excels the same class of clerk in England, and he has frequently a nobility of presence, a serious air, a self-sufficiency, singularly contrasting with our knock-kneed, hump-backed, pitiful, and over-worked drudges. Like the rest of his countrymen his shining virtues are obedience to his superiors, resignation in misfortune, charity, and hospitality to men of his sect, filial, parental, and conjugal affection. His moral conduct is usually irreprehensible, he never drinks, seldom swears, gambling and speculation

are his most noticeable vices. It is curious to see how attached he becomes if kindly treated; he will lie terribly to prove the firm he belongs to does the largest business in India, and he seems to care very little how long he works after office hours so long as he knows he is furthering the interests of his house. He introduces a large body of clients, and his salary is often based on the extent of his connection with men of influential position likely to bring work to the firm.

But this picture, like every other, has its bad side. Untruth to the Oriental appears no vice, and he will not scruple to tell the most unblushing falsehood when he thinks it will save him a scolding or relieve him from trouble. He has, indeed, no prejudice either in favour of truth or falsehood, and the custom of most Europeans to tell the former seems to him an amiable weakness, to be taken advantage of as often as possible. Honesty is to him an unnatural qualm, his want of self-respect is shocking to the occidental, and he utterly lacks moral elevation. Nor is he above corruption, for he will take a bribe to let out a secret, or to favour an influential friend, for avarice, or the wish to serve the great, supersedes even his honest attachment to his firm. Docile and pliable to one's face, and very obedient, he is obstinate as a mule to your back, for, conceited as he usually is, he seldom apprehends his ways can be inferior to those of the Feringhees. Nature and climate have also unfitted him for unflagging application to his

task, and he rapidly becomes tired of an assiduous strain of mental work. He takes up nothing in a spirit of thorough earnestness ; in all that concerns industry he displays an utter want of conscience sets no value on time, and our energy seems, to his languid mind, oppressive and irrational. His chattering propensities are only excelled by those of his women, and are utterly irrepressible. Procrastination, habitual subterfuge, nonchalance, and conceit, are his principal faults, and he is prolix to desperation. He has no feeling about the sacredness of labour, and in vain would you look for scrupulous performance of any task at his hands.

But the partners come to work early, and the day's business is soon in full swing. Hand-bells are tinkling all over the place, and hamals run to and fro to fetch the clerks as they are wanted to receive their masters' instructions. The work is far heavier than in London, or in a busy mercantile country town, and Englishmen at home make no greater error than when they imagine business in India is easy, casual, and left to underlings. The merchant, the banker, the solicitor, work considerably harder than they would do in the old country. No Saturday half-holiday breaks the week's continuous toil, the vacations are few, and usually short. For instance, the High Court rises in May and October, and then but for a month ; and occasional native holidays are seldom observed by the solicitors and European attorneys. Living in Hindostan is, for the European, an expensive affair,

the native manages to grow fat on simple and the cheapest of fare, he lives with the simplicity of an ascetic, and competition has now grown so keen between the two races, that if the white man is not continually poring over his desk, he soon gets outstripped by the Aryan in the struggle for wealth.

Clients soon commence to arrive, the occidental being immediately ushered into the partner's rooms, whilst the native is usually introduced by a managing clerk, who interprets from Hindi into English and *vice versa*, if occasion requires. The Parsee sits in his mitre by the solicitor's side exactly as he would do if paying a call, the Hindoo and Mahomedan wear the turban, half-castes and Eurasians appear bareheaded. The greater portion of the native clients wear stout English boots and white cotton stockings gartered at the knee, similar to those worn by the managing clerks. They become greatly excited over the recital of their legal difficulties, and it is not uncommon to see a plaintiff who imagines he has been aggrieved appear with a host of friends, who have come to corroborate his case, to explain it, and to lay down very bad law. All shout at the top of their voices, move restlessly on their chairs, madly gesticulate, and rise to fine frenzy at the narration of the manner in which honesty, which is invariably on their side, has been tampered with. Nevertheless, they are quick to seize an unfair advantage, not scrupulous in availing themselves of the dark ways and quibbles of the

law, and they use our courts for purposes of revenge and to pay off old scores. No stigma attaches to a man who plots a villainous scheme to ruin his antagonist unless he fails to attain the ends he has in view, and the practice of false complaints, inaccurate statements, and circumstantial lying has been reduced by the Oriental to an exact and almost mathematical science. If a great man, the client has himself announced by all his titles, and comes down the passage accompanied by several lazy secretaries, indolent retainers, parasitic maggots, and nothing better. The humblest Rajah cannot step across an official threshold without an escort of gold sticks, treasurers and flunkies, and other valetry *ad libitum*.

In so large a community as Bombay legal business is necessarily of a very miscellaneous character, and is seldom limited to purely mercantile matters. Now and again a will, a conveyance, or a bundle of family records will throw side lights on Hindoo or other Eastern society; but, as a rule the Oriental will rather expend his last anna than expose his domestic affairs to the public eye. Ronald's work therefore mainly consists in the formation of companies, of which the town is teeming, in transactions on bills and hoondies, and the sale and purchase of land. The native buys landed property as he buys a bullock or a horse, and can scarce be made to understand the difference existing between the two by the English solicitor. All immovable property is regis-

tered in a public registry, and were it not for this matters of title would be more hopelessly involved than in any other country. Ronald seldom finds any change from this monotony, and during his long residence he has seldom seen the native female client. If a widow or a wife has business affairs to transact, her kinsmen or her stewards usually directly communicate with the solicitors, and as widows manage very considerable houses, these interviews are of frequent occurrence. The publicity with which we publish our matrimonial infelicities in the Divorce Court to the world is a matter of unending abhorrence and shocking surprise to the Oriental, with perhaps a sole exception in favour of the Parsee, who has his own matrimonial court composed of laity and priests chosen from his own sect. But Ronald, like most Europeans, cares little to investigate native ways, and their reticence in respect of their family affairs is perfectly immaterial to him. He is eager to accommodate English laws to a people whose customs he views as extraordinary prejudices, and, if allowed, I do not doubt he would replace the body of Hindoo laws, the outgrowth of centuries, by a brand new code published in Calcutta. Our little insignificant island, in the far west of Europe, has, in his opinion, subjugated this magnificent empire merely to open a market for our manufactures, and to afford scope for the enrichment and ambition of a surplus portion of her population. He himself is a mere machine for the acquisition of silver rupees, he

works like a journeyman for this object, and puts out all his powers to hear the sound of the coin falling into the office scales. Since he came courageously out here to seek his fortune amidst his irksome labour, he has been cheered by the hope that one day he would again see some fair face in the hills of Scotland, or the sweet cottages of Albion, and find himself once more seated before the parental hearth. Fortune has not been inexorable, and the silvery tinkle of the money tells him that the hour of his deliverance will soon be at hand. The mail brings him almost as many soft protestations and tender keepsakes as commercial correspondence, for he is known to be a matrimonial nugget throughout his English parish.

The managing clerks walk off to the High Court and other tribunals with bundles of paper tied with red tape, and holding glazed umbrellas they will unfold as sunshades as soon as they get into the shadeless streets. They are soon followed by several of the partners, in the old-fashioned palkees, which rapidly oscillate as they move off on the shoulders of the perspiring hamals. Messengers run from the office to the different courts all the day long, and the tinkle of the telephone is almost incessant. When the courts adjourn for luncheon, the partners return weary and worn to take a short tiffin, to enjoy a few minutes' snooze and then to return to renewed toil. Millionaire merchants, brokers, Bhattias and Banias pace up and down the office passages ges-

ticulating and patiently waiting their turn for a legal consultation. The managing clerks are encircled with rows of native clients seated asquat on the chairs and explaining their cases; the copyists bend over their desks writing as hard as they possibly can on paper, seldom on parchment. At four the butler comes round with a cup of strong tea for every European who has a seat in the firm; and most refreshing is the beverage to the jaded toiler running down with perspiration.

The subordinate clerks are the first to depart, the little round cap they wear whilst at work being removed and replaced by the turban that has been lying before them since they came in. The partners are the next to follow, but the managing clerks often stop on till a late hour. About six the hamals, who have probably some score of miles to walk home, fidget and give unmistakable signs they would like to be going. At length the last document is completed, to-morrow's work fairly under weigh, the punkah is stayed, and finding his way to his pony, more dead than alive, Ronald rides off for his evening constitutional. From ten to seven he has continuously worked in a temperature registering 87°, and this is what Englishmen at home call a "lazy Indian." Merchants work fully as hard, but usually only from eleven to five.

And he has scarce turned the corner of the street before the Sepoys and hamals, doffing their liveries and once again in sordid rags, start for their lowly homes.

LETTER XVII.

THE SMALL CAUSES COURT.

SATURDAY, 16TH JUNE, 1883.

BOMBAY.

A CLOUD has gathered over the fortunes of one Gopinath Balcrustnajee. Unfortunate speculations in the cotton market, costly display, household festivities, nautches, and munificent religious donations had already considerably impaired the extent of his wealth. But the magnificent entertainments which as befitting a person of his high caste, his education, and social position he considered it incumbent to give on the occasion of his daughter's recent nuptials have plunged him into irredeemable debt. The girl, of course, had to be married, a desirable match secured at whatever cost, a preposterously long list of gold ornaments provided as dowry, and to meet these and other expenses loans were borrowed at ruinous

rates of interest. The present extravagant scale of Hindoo nuptial expenses had, moreover, to be un-murmuringly submitted to, for to give an entertainment inferior to the conventional one would have excited the derision of every member of Gopinath's circle. Groaning over his diminished stores, utterly unable to check the reckless profusion, this poor merchant, like every other native, followed whithersoever custom or dustoor might lead him; his house flowed with butter and milk, his keys were not his own during those dreadful days, beggars came and were dismissed with rich presents, again and again the bards sang, and again and again they ate. Some eighteen to twenty thousand rupees were accordingly lavished as recklessly as if they had been but cowrie shells; the Brahmins were entertained, the Koonbees feasted, dancing girls hired, and oh! miracle, the bridegroom's relatives sent away fairly pleased. But no sooner had the bride left the parental roof for her future home than the creditors came down on her father.

He who was born to great wealth and respectability in the city of Bombay was now found to have reduced himself to poverty by his reckless prodigality. He had beautified our streets with two fountains, and erected a dome over his temple. Not an anna had he squandered in vicious living, for he was neither a gamester, a drunkard, or a libertine. His extreme generosity to poor connections—which is a marked trait in the Hindoo

character—had been carried to an unreasonable extent. His all absorbing powers of domestic affection, like Pharoah's lean kine, had swallowed up all his hereditary savings. To celebrate the nuptials of his child he had been compelled to sell himself body and soul to the Marwarees, or money lenders, the bugbears of Aryan society. Henceforth he can only subsist on the proceeds of sale of his wife's jewels, and on such casual employment as he may now and again obtain. He still lives in the family mansion, but through want of repair it is falling to ruins, and merry-making is no longer heard within its walls. He has ceased to be the object of universal praise, and all who were formerly maintained by his bounty scarce acknowledge his sacred character by presenting him with customary alms. The loss of that consideration and respect which are so dear to Orientals, is the climax of his misery.

And just at present one of his creditors is especially troublesome, for the dun is actually suing in the Small Causes Court for the price of a wedding gift—a collyrium case set with dull amethysts. This dun is the wealthiest jewel merchant in Bombay, and also a person of considerable influence in native courts. It would be hard to estimate how often he has been the recipient of dresses of honour, and pieces of muslin and kincob, and yards of satin flowered with silver and gold. Wherever he goes he is treated with kind and polite attentions, seated on embroidered cushions, cooled with rose water,

crowned and neckleted with wreaths of mogrees, and adorned with nosegays of roses and jessamine, and treated to betel and pan. A Nawab recently sent him a superb dinner of fifty covers; horses from princely stables eat in his manger, and he is the happy possessor of lakhs of rupees struck in native mints or royal treasuries. As precious gems are more highly valued than any other kind of present in the East you will easily imagine he drives a thriving trade, and even the well-to-do cultivators resort to him to invest the produce of their crops in jewelry to be worn by their wives until an evil hour may compel them to sell it. A leading firm of English attorneys act on his behalf, and sue in his name against the unfortunate Gopinath Balcrustnaje.

The case has attracted but little attention, and the court is not crowded.

The Judge sits on a raised platform running along the whole length of one end of the room. A punkah fiercely sways over his head and circulates a refreshing current of air. He looks languid and pale, and his black silken gown, slight though it be, appears distressingly warm. He listens to the pleadings with little evident interest, but this indifference is only assumed, for no man is abler or more patient than he. Climate, of course, does not allow Bench or Bar to wear the legal wig we are accustomed to see in our own English courts. All Europeans here, therefore, sit bareheaded, from the Judge to the casual spectator.

Immediately below the Judge, the Chief Clerk,

who is a Hindoo, fumes, fusses, and frets. This functionary wears a red turban, most beautifully folded, a spotless white tunic, a handsome overcoat, and in his left ear three small pearls set in dull gold. Like all native officials he is puffed up with the pride of office, and discharges his easy duties with the gravity of a pontiff celebrating high mass at a coronation service. He calls out the names of the witnesses with much deliberation and absurd modulations of voice, adjures a client to behave himself, and informs the Bar how a writ should be executed. The passion for conferring obligations upon men in authority which exists in the mind of the Hindoo accounts for the numerous courtiers who lean forward to grasp his hand, to mend his pen, and to supply him with chewing mixtures. If report speaks true, since he has stepped into the receipt of his Government salary relations of every degree have flocked from all parts of the empire to prey upon his facile affections. He sits before a high desk placed on a most cumbersome and solid oak table.

Around this table are grouped several English counsel, an English attorney of the High Court, native solicitors, and many vakeels or advocates, either Hindoos or Parsees, for at present I see no Mahommedan pleader here. The Hindoos wear turbans, the Parsees black mitres, and much the latter grumble at this. Why cannot they sport the cool roundabout cap instead of these hot glazed helmets of theirs? they constantly

ask. They should, however, remember that, unlike the poorer class of Hindoo, they may enter the presence of Justice in boots of the creakiest kind, and that they are not compelled to leave their shoes in rows at the doorway. The majority of the Fire-worshippers wear light silk trousers of red, pink, or yellow, and black frock coats cut after the English or native prevalent fashions. They are, as a rule, able, astute, very supercilious, and greatly delight to sneer at the Englishman when he omits to pronounce his own language correctly. They study our dictionary, make use of our current colloquial expressions, reproduce our ideas as expressed in our recent magazines, and have all our mannerisms at ready command. Neither they nor the Hindoos impress one as gifted with any oratorical power, for they all appear to lack the emotional feeling and the physique necessary to further great causes. Their pleadings are conducted in an almost conversational tone; their voices are unmusical and stiff; they totally lack humour, but their comments are often sarcastic, and ill-nature crops out through much false amiability. Their gestures are few, and usually sober, their manners oily and remarkably bland. They have not studied the laws in a liberal spirit, but with hair-splitting, to weave webs of scheming chicane, and for the purposes of finical investigations. The tumult of feeling, the agitation, the vehemence of passion, which the occidental orator considers a criterion of elo-

quence is merged by the Oriental into the refining of sentences, skilful word-turning ; and tragic effect is destroyed by his flowery diction and the monotony and uncouthness of his gesture and his attitudes.

A railing of wood running across the middle of the room divides the bar from the space allotted to the unprofessional public. Here, seated on benches of wood, a score of natives are dosing, chattering, and occasionally taking a languid interest in the affairs of the court. Most of them are Marwarees, otherwise money-lenders, by caste, and extortioners by nature and art. They clutch ledgers, soiled papers, and tallies, no doubt in proof of the disputed claims on bills, hoondies, and bonds the Judge is shortly to hear. Several of them are fanning themselves with fans of palm leaf as lackadaisically as any ball-room flirt is accustomed to do. Their garments are soiled, their turbans are tawdry; they are generally displeasing to the olfactory nerves. Yet they contrast favourably with yonder Bania merchants, who have evidently been feeding on garlic and spice, and whose peaked hats appear to be coated with incalculable incrustations of dirt. Nevertheless, poor as they seem, an acquaintance whispers to me that two of their number are very rich men, but so intolerably mean that they will not even listen to any proposal which would place within their reach a few of the conveniences or comforts of life. So intense is their avarice that they have

never been known to buy grain for pigeons, to purchase the liberty of captive birds, or to buy a trained cobra to let him go free, and they even begrudge the temple subscription. Behind them—quite in the corner—a couple of hideous old crones sit cowering under their fetid multi-coloured rags, paralysed with fear, probably at the thoughts of approaching cross-examination. A Parsee pauper, clad in her faded finery, is pressing her suit on her unwilling attorney, and is loud in shrill-voiced dispraise of her son Jamsetjee. This Widow Blackacre of the East has grown old in the courts of justice. Her head is quite turned with her fancied wrongs, and her presence is dreaded by every official of the various tribunals. In the verandah I fancy a native vakeel is instructing a pliable witness to testify in accordance with the story mapped out for him, for with much mystery a Government note seems changing hands. The heat is intense, and sun and dust alike stream into court in defiance of reed tatties of kusa grass and latticed green blinds. How one gasps for the slightest breath of fresh air.

But Gopinath, who knows not a syllable of English, has just left the witness-box, counsel having conducted the examination through the aid of one of the Court's sworn interpreters. The latter officials, with marvellous quickness and facility, translate from one tongue into another. Nothing can be more astonishing than the rapidity

and accuracy of this performance, which I am assured by dint of habit soon ceases to be a strain on the intellect, and becomes a purely mechanical process. The evidence given is highly damaging to Gopinath's case, and the jeweller is pretty sure of his anticipated successful decree. But the Judge, at this stage of the proceedings, suggests an adjournment for tiffin, a suggestion cordially responded to by the exhausted members of the English bar.

There will, I fear, be nothing in this suit to relieve the prosaic nature of most Indian legal proceedings. The witnesses are not likely to yield the slightest amusement either by abnormal impudence, barefaced falsehoods, strange dialect, or curious appearance. Pundits and Moulvies will not be applied to to explain curious customs and holy writ. Nor is any high-caste Hindoo or aristocratic Mussulman lady subpoenaed to appear before the tribunal. We shall therefore see no palanquin brought into court with a fair witness, well protected from view by sliding shutters, presumably seated inside. The interpreter will not be called upon to swear or affirm the gentle deponent thus shrouded from the sacrilegious eyes of the world, and then to put his questions to her which she will timidly answer from the silken enclosure. I regret this, as it ever affords entertainment to gaze on the japanned palkee, the richly liveried bearers, and the costly attire of the waiting-maids, who often surround the beautiful cage.

Then to be sure it pleasantly titillates the curiosity to see a bejewelled hand oft and anon protruded under the silken curtain to clutch papers or notes. One's imagination is soon astir in trying to imagine what she can possibly be like who thus sits within. Maybe she is a pretty brunette, with glossy black hair, smelling of sweet jessamine oils. Perhaps as she sits tailor-wise in the dark perfumed box, her languishing eyes may be fixed upon one. Alas, notwithstanding the affirmation of the servants, or of a near relative who depones to the identity of the person encaged, it is quite possible the mellifluous witness's voice is that of a male enjoying a sly laugh at the expense of the Court. Of course this privilege accorded to native ladies is probably like other privileges, grossly abused. But Eastern ladies require concealment, and native husbands are far less easily manageable in this respect than people suppose.

But the court is already quite empty, for Judge, counsel, and public have found their ways below-stairs. The native pleader has not yet adopted our blue bag of baize, and he now marches off with his slovenly papers tied up in a dirty white kerchief, or strapped with faded red tape. The other divisional courts are also disgorging their litigious hordes, and every exit is crammed. Bantias in red, and every other species of native, struggle and push against each other, gesticulate, salaam, and cry "Ram, Ram." The Marwarees abound in large numbers, the barren soil of their country

and the scarcity of their food stamped upon their spare forms, their fleshless muscles, and sharp, piercing features. They still wear the dhotie and scarf, and ear-rings of their ancestors; and form almost a different ethnological variety from other Hindoo races. In perseverance, in shrewdness, in self-denial, in most of the qualities which conduce to success in life, the Marwaree has seldom been surpassed. The court-yard is quite gay with native coachmen, in every sort of costume, driving either horses or jingling bullocks. We elect on a buggy, and drive off in style, but not without casting a glance through the opening in our vehicle's hood.

The court-house, which precisely resembles any other plain native habitation, is suffused in sunshine. Its yellow walls are almost too glaring to look fixedly on. The fresh blue and white paint is peeling off the doorways, as it seethes and rises in diminutive bubbles. Clouds of dust rise skywards, and in spiral wreaths float over the roof. A plainer and more commonplace-looking building it would be hard to discover.

A yell, and hootings innumerable, suddenly attract our attention. On inquiry we find it is occasioned by the Marwarees, who are hissing and illusing a casteman of theirs, who has recently married a Moslem girl. The luckless bridegroom is roughly jostled you may be sure.

Such is a morning's experience of the Small Causes Court.

How true is it that the primitive Aryan, with his adoration of the elements, and his simple requirements, has ceased to exist; and the busy throng we have but just left behind us have reached a pitch of commercial civilization at the antipodes to the crude condition of Vedic barter. How unlike too, has their fate been to that of other conquered races, such as the Maories, the Incas, and African indigenous populations, who have been well-nigh improved off the earth by the advent of European colonisation. Under occidental rule, the Hindoo has thriven far better than under the sceptre of his native princes, for the Oriental mind which has given arts, inventions, and codes to the western world, has never yet been able to originate a system of government so paternal as the British rule of to-day; native potentates have ever been grossly tyrannical; the principles of politics have never engaged the attention of their ministers, and as they have never conceived anything like Republicanism, they have never understood the emancipation from political servitude enjoyed by the Hindoo of this age.

LETTER XVIII.

THE VICTORIA GARDENS.

SUNDAY, 17TH JUNE, 1883.

BOMBAY.

IMAGINE that the exotic plants growing in hot-houses at Kew Botanical Gardens have suddenly been transported out here, and that they are all growing in the tropical atmosphere of Bombay, on some four acres of ground, and you will have a very fair idea of our Victoria Gardens. In this public enclosure the Hindoo enjoys the relaxation which an English Sabbath forces upon him, and the Mahommedan brings his children to gaze at some rare tree or to gloat on the Bengal tiger.

Around verdant strips of sunburnt and russet sward, palms shoot upwards with tufts underhung by the ripening cocoa-nut. Plaintains yield a grateful and friendly shade, whilst the plenteous bunches of fruit make one as envious as a tody-

drawer before a prolific tody tree. From the branches of the peepul, of the tamarind, and of the mango, creepers rain down their beautiful flowers, and their soft, glossy, glittering foliage undulates over the cordage of inextricable adventitious feelers. The dense shade of the almond is alive with the rustle of birds, and in a tree top the bulbul pours forth its full-throated note. Black shrubs, with under leaves of purple or dead gold are relieved by the vividdest emerald green of the neem, and the beds of brilliant flowers remind one of the variegated Persian carpets put out for the Moslem's evening prayer. Ferns prettily arranged under glass houses grow to almost Australasian dimensions, and as pod and capsule explode one lingers to think of the combat waging in their stout and rough trunks. Bamboos, banyans, and other tropical trees vie with the arboreal productions of other gorgeous eastern lands in the massive girth of their stature; and highly-prized specimens from Cashmere, and from further India interlace their yellow and scarlet and green with more lowly vegetations. The silver glass ball so doted on for ornamental purposes by the Hindoo is dotted about the grounds, and in its sparkling circumference miniature portraiture of the grand vegetation, and of swinging baskets filled with serpentine flowerets, are shifting about.

Bereft of native originality and slavishly following European horticultural designs, the naked gardener plants his cuttings in the ruddy red

mould of the well-manured soil. In the distance his wife is sweeping the fallen leaves into her wickerwork basket with a graceful undulation of her bent body, her bangles and bracelets tinkling the while. A tiny tot romps about on the grass, unclothed, protuberant in the belly, yet very charming withal. How I regret that religious prejudice forbids my offering him some of the sweets I often carry for the children of the white race. With one solitary tuft of black hair bobbing on his little shaven brown head, finger in mouth, eyes flashing pleasure and wonder, but sedate as an old man, this little Brahminical mite suddenly seats himself under a creeper to watch the ways of the white ant and the centipede. Unreflective but sweet naturalist, without book or master's ferule picking up his own small observations, touching the creeping things with a timid finger, quickly withdrawn amidst pearly laughter.

I stroll down the long vista of Oriental vegetation under natural cloisters of babul mimosa and sweet acacia to a deep circular well, from which two patient white bullocks are drawing skins full of water. As they reach the brim of the well the skins opening, let forth silvery currents which rush and swirl along artificial channels to irrigate the rootlets of magnificent Bougainvillias and multi-coloured flower beds. The humble beasts stop at a word, proceed at the slightest touch, and are as docile and gentle as the elephant. Natives

gather around the plashing water, for to Oriental ears no sound is sweeter than that of a rushing stream. Eastern imagination can hardly form a picture of luxurious bliss without the gushing rills of fountains and Oriental literature dallies at disproportionate length over the seraphic delights of shady lakes. To enjoy, nay, to doat on the sounds of cascades one must have lived in the East, and to fully understand the importance attached by the patriarchs to the possession of a well, one must have ridden a camel for days over a trackless desert of sand parched by the heat of a furnace. No incitation to virtue could more potently influence the Asiatic mind than Mahomet's promise to reward the good believer with the sight of expansive waters in Paradise.

The extreme end of the gardens is devoted to zoological purposes. Here is a cage full of beautifully-coloured wild fowl from Lahore, yonder a den where the Bengal tiger, hot and distressed groans, extended at full length. A small hyena is being fed by the keeper, with milk passed through a reed, the majestic Indian elk ambles in his paddock of netted gauze wire before a featherless and mangy-looking emu, and a wild squirrel leaps over the back of the slow moving tortoise. In a pit, provided with a climbing pole and several rough baths of stone, a few black bears restlessly pace up and down, oppressed by the heat, rubbing their sides against the hot walls of their prison. The natives who

are gazing at them in one bright-coloured ring around the pit's mouth, address these shambling creatures with the quiet humour of the Man Friday in Robinson Crusoe talking to Bruin, but they start off with fear and trembling at a growl, and bring them no cakes or buns as we English do. A small boy indeed strolls about with horrible pasties, but these confections more often disappear down the human thorax than find their way to the animal's jaws. Mahommedan women in rich barbaric vestments and drawers of silk, and brightly-dressed Hindoo females gape through iron bars at the languid monkeys and indolent antelopes. But as a rule little attempt is made to tease the poor hot and jaded beasts, to rouse the small collection of apes to wrath, and it seems to me our progenitor, the chimpanzee, is regarded by these Asiatics with great veneration, not to say idolatry.

And how else could it be with a people to whom, for the most part, the transmigration of souls is a chief article of belief. In their peregrinations through the animal world is it not possible that a human soul may be embodied in yonder chattering paroquet, a Psyche in this pretty gazelle? "Let the nostrils be carefully closed and the mouth be kept shut" says the Brahmin "lest by a too frequent inhalation an animalcule be swallowed and insect life be destroyed. The busy Bania merchant will pause in the most exciting bargain to pick up a spider.

that has dropped from its thread and tenderly replaces it in its web. On his deathbed he will leave considerable legacies to keep up this city's pinjrapoles, where worn-out cows, decaying bullocks, elderly fowls, and diseased birds and beasts of all sorts, irrespective of the creed of their owners, are looked after much like our paupers at home. In his zeal for the welfare of the animal world a Jain will bribe a beggar to hire out his flesh to afford a succulent repast for the poor starving fleas, and the destruction of his choice plants by the locust will not even induce him to raise his finger against that aggressive insect. Holy men are said annually to pass from one extremity of the Empire to the other, sweeping the ground before them as they go, lest the most diminutive creature be crushed by their steps; the mythological tales of anchorites sacrificing themselves to feed a tiger's hunger are occasionally realised in actual life, and cremation is preferred to burial, inasmuch as the latter course breeds worms who would have no provision against starvation after having consumed the body from which they originated. Hence this Pythagorean doctrine which embodies a human soul in every living creature produces in the Hindoo mind a veneration for animals as great as that of the Egyptian of old for the cat or the ibis. Unfortunately veneration is often allied to unkindliness, and beasts of burden are shamefully treated out here.

Metempsychosis is a desolating doctrine, nevertheless fraught with endless ills to the races who so tenaciously hold it. The chances of an entire release from transmigration seem so remote, the holiness that is exacted before the supreme gods consent to annihilate the soul, or rather absorb it in their own essence, appears so impossible of attainment that men from very faint-heartedness at ever becoming sufficiently good to obtain nirvana, cease to try to become so. Unconscious of the Protean existences which he has undergone, as he is ignorant of those which still await him, the Hindoo spends his life with no cheering prospect of Paradise immediately after death such as comforts the Christian through his earthly pilgrimage. A slight dereliction from caste, some omission in a trivial ceremonial may after death plunge him for a renewed lease of life in the form of a poor woman begging her bed, or in the prostitutes' body, to lead a dolesome existence in a world he last left rich, wealthy, and honoured. The capricious gods, divine protagonists, possess a wardrobe of human and animal forms into which they insufflate the undying soul from mere caprice, and the foetus that swells the womb of the vilest hog is at their nod endued with spiritual existence. Neither sex, nor former existence has weight with them, for the eternal spark will go forth to-day dressed in the embodiment of a noble, to-morrow as a dancing

girl, in a few short years, it may be, imprisoned in the boar, and beating its butterfly wings under the hide of the spotted panther. The period of final absorption in the divine essence may therefore be removed to crores and billions of years, to ages too incalculable for human finite intellect to grasp even a notion of. With such an outlook before him the worshipper naturally ceases to care for aught but the pleasures of the passing hour, the sunlight that flashes over his small iota of life, the fountains that sparkle and the women who sing. Dealing in enormous periods of time with all the recklessness of a modern geologist the Brahmin promises his congregation an ultimate salvation which is too distant for them to strive for and too hard of attainment.

And as I sit here I picture the mild spirit that looks out of yonder pitiful child's eyes, running its gamuts of existence in a past world. I wonder in what shape her immortal essence may have stood before Shah Jehan's peacock throne, listening there to the bards who turned night into day with their sweet strains, and apotheosed in flames on a lake of rosewater. Dressed in the body and habiliments of a Kashmirian girl, may she not have sung before Abker with monotonous hum to the clatter of gold tambourines and bejewelled tom-toms. Habited as a Maharasthra Princess I see her rule Maharastra, and as a beggar woman she passes before me on her way begging alms before Sivajee. Poor thing, imprisoned in the

slight figure of a slave girl, she is purchased by wild Gonds; see how carefully they feed the Meria victim for sacrifice, her flesh becomes plump and rosy, they tie her to a peepul tree, they kiss her, pet her, love her, and limb from limb her clay prison is torn to devote it to the Earth Mother. As a gentle wife she ascends the funeral pyre with her husband's shoe bound on her bosom, and as a choice favourite anon she is buried alive as she sits by the side of a corpse in a pit. In her endless changes she directs the light of the glow-worm over the jungle path; groans in the body of the over-ridden mare, is worshipped as the cow, and, decked with blue tassels and Mogree garlands, expires on the temple altar under the sacrificial knife. She has sailed on the breeze as a gaily-painted butterfly, in vain has she combated the cyclone that tore her gauzy wings, and her affectionate spirit has dwelt in the dove and the bee, and hummed in the closed calyx of the lotus. Idle fancies of an idle hour worthy of the theory which calls them forth.

But with a creed uninfluenced by any such Pythagorean notions the Parsee thoroughly enjoys the ways of the wild beasts. He can laugh heartily at the monkeys, chaff the chimpanzee, and dare to describe it with garrulity and irreverence. If he considers himself linked by a chain of prior existences to the animal world, it is much more likely to be by one of Darwin's forging than that of Eastern sages. If educated, he is sure to have

read Haeckel and Wallace, and he will pour forth a discourse, osteological and embryological, as tumid as the scientific twaddle to be heard at our Zoo. His excitement, his gestures, are all imitated by our progenitor within the cage, and I have seen a knowing baboon dress himself up in a piece of black paper to imitate the Zoroastrian head-gear. The coolies, meanwhile, cast envious glances at their slothful arborescent friends, and admire the cunning which prompted these beasts to leave off speaking and adopt tails and hairy coats to avoid working. A lazy vulture seems quite prepared, sleepy as he is, to hold an inquest over a diminutive Sabeian who is tickling the irritated bird's feathers.

But other avocations now call me away. I jump in my carriage, cast a glance at the Asiatic Society's Museum, which always seems closed, and pass out of the gardens close by a tall tower. Well-appointed barouches drive in between the open iron gates full of Mahommedans and their pretty sons. The sound of plashing water pleasantly falls on the ear, and soon the water coolies pass me at a trot, throwing the gushing liquid from the skin nozzles on either side of the path. The soil, still parched with meridional heat, greedily licks up every pearly drop, and the clouds of dust, which for over nine months have not been moistened by a single shower, are for a moment subdued.

Under green branches swarms of gnats, pen-

dant like nests, are calming down in their whirling evolutions as the sun sinks. Hurdles and matting are already disposed to keep tender plants from the chilling effects of the dew. A bat or two on extended wing have already thrown their uncanny shadows over the path. Gayer than even the bright beds of flowers which are so fast closing are the Parsee groups of women reclining under the shade of the glorious trees. Meanwhile the cricket raises his joyful cry, his deep and chirruping voice testifying to his robust organization. The confused murmur which proceeds at eve from the bosom of great towns reaches me through the distance. Occasionally, too, the sound of various stringed instruments is heard in the midst of the general hum.

LETTER XIX.

THE CRAWFORD MARKETS.

MONDAY, 18TH JUNE, 1883.

BOMBAY.

ABSURD as it may seem to you, I nevertheless superintend my own marketing twice in the week. Indeed, were I not to inquire into the price of everything that is brought to my table, you little suspect how my servants would cheat me. I should very soon find my bills most outrageously high, and my cook's commission would rapidly rise to a hundred instead of fifty per cent. on every article purchased for my larder.

Naturally unfitted for household concerns, I at first found it intolerably irksome to have to dive into the mysteries of the current prices of rice, meat, vegetables, and bread. But the pleasure of checkmating my scullion in his villanous ways, of humbling the pride of his rascality and his pleasure in roguery, added a zest to the occupation

which soon made it quite bearable. As men do their marketing here quite as much as the women, there is nothing unusual or derogatory in my catering for myself, and guarding my purse from the depredations of my domestics. It is what ninety-nine bachelors out of a hundred, owing to Hindoo dishonesty, are compelled to do.

So, twice in the week, I find my way to the Crawford Market, a handsome, roomy structure of brick, occupying several acres of ground. I cannot ascribe any particular style of architecture to the lofty nondescript building, but I believe the useful clock tower that surmounts the entrance is at all events Swiss, if not Gothic. Imagine two roomy aisles of a very large church joined at right angles to each other, and you will then have an idea of this busy mart, which is Bombay's Covent Garden. Thither from all parts of the city vendors and purchasers are hastily flocking.

Crowds of coolie women trot down at the double from the adjoining and stifling streets of the native town. They wear the tight scrimp bodice, many rows of blue and white beads around the neck, and the robe passed between the legs and tightly wound around the waist. On their bare heads some of them carry wicker-work baskets piled up with mangoes, punkins, and liches, whilst others toil under heavy loads of monstrous jacks, brinjals, bendies, turoys, beans, chillies, and faggot-like bundles of dark sugar cane. The harlequin crowd, in their savage garniture of colour,

are reinforced by moving streams of dusky men, but partially clothed, perspiring under the weight of jamboos, limes, citrons, and pomegranates, and even the little girls struggle about with capacious baskets of fragrant fruits distilling their perfumed odours.

The women occasionally encourage each other with harsh exhortations as they scamper along in single file in garrulous family groups of twos and threes. Now and again one of them halts to ease her aching sides, another stops to adjust the single cloth she wears round her loins or to wipe the perspiration that clings to her eyelashes in heavy drops, whilst the third shakes off the dust which swathes her feet right up to the knees in a pall. Yonder a pretty lass pouts and almost seems crying, for, as her soft arms are raised to support her reed basket, she can no longer shield her modest face from the insolent gaze of the passer-by. Quite close to my side a poor woman, far advanced in pregnancy, seems to pant out her life as she is being unloaded by a Mussulman salesman. Her shoulders and back are covered with sores, like the hide of an ill-favoured beast. Her garments are so thin and so threadbare, her jewels so paltry, but a cheap bangle of steel is all she wears on her ankles. She moreover seems conscious of her hideousness, for she hangs down her head piteously, like a sheep led to the slaughter, and her glass nose-ring but serves to show the crookedness of her nasal organ. Fairer women passing her by

seem to be shy of approaching her, she receives not one single kind greeting, and when a weedy-looking youth expectorates on her breast she bears the indignity without raising her face. Her limbs are deformed, her back is bent double in a country where native womankind walk erect, her hair is quite grey, and Shaitan or devil is the nickname she goes by. Constant poverty, child bearing, and accumulated misery have entirely debased her eldritch figure, and given a squat and savage appearance to this unhappy being. Yet how meekly she bears the reproaches of the salesman who scolds her for being a few minutes behind time in her arrival. As the rebuke proceeds, her tears fall fast; by her craven and abject posture, her looks of penitence, she endeavours to provoke commiseration, and with her index finger gently points to the signs of her approaching maternity, as if that were enough to explain the reason of her tardiness. But the salesman coarsely laughs and asks for another and better excuse to explain the delay. Then I overhear her saying she has had to remove a wealthy Parsee's furniture, for when we change houses in India all our goods and chattels usually go from one residence to the other on coolies, or women's heads. But the Moslem pays little attention to her whining excuses, and seems engaged in contrasting her feeble limbs and tottering, shambling gait with the stalwart calves and splendid stride of a lusty girl who comes bowling along, raising the dust.

And to think that there are scores of other women here, toiling and working with the pains of childbirth upon them like this poor drudge!

All along the kerb of the pavement fronting the market bullock carts are drawn up in line. Most of the oxen are decorated with flowers, or necklets of very coarse beads. Others have the horns painted with vermilion, and their backs are covered with crimson cloths, spotted with discs of black, which resemble the mantles worn by nautch girls. The jingle of cattle bells, the cries of the drivers, the barbaric colours of the vehicles, the chatter of brightly-clad womankind, the children slipping out underneath the cloth hoods of the bullock carts, the drivers astride of the axe-poles urging their beasts along with toe and stick, the many native policemen, create a rare hubbub. And a buggy or two, driven by a vociferous Jehu in a fez and blue jersey—passing tramways, crammed with Hindoos and Parsee women, gliding on rails of steel—victorias with white-coated sahibs, waggon and water carts, guided by dusky and but partially-clothed natives, all lend wonderful animation to the busy scene. One riots in colour, in the pitiless but splendid glare, the blue sky overhead, the painted houses, and the crowd more varied than the ballet of the best transformation scene of a Christmas pantomime.

But here come a band of swart male coolies, following hard upon the feminine drudges, but as

a rule at a more leisurely pace and less heavily burdened. Their clothes are terribly filthy and sordid, and are often limited to a single sheet tied round the waist. They are wretchedly poor, thin and attenuated, fairly intelligent, and their pleasures—if pleasures they have—consist in chewing betel and pan. Four annas, or sixpence, is reckoned a very good day's wage, and on this they are imagined to live like Bhattia millionaires. They carry their burdens usually on the head as the women do, but occasionally one of their number is to be seen toiling along with a bamboo resting on his shoulders, at each end of which brass kettles or nets full of fresh fish are suspended, and oscillate at the end of a cord. If unoccupied, these Oriental porters sit in the midst of their empty baskets in front of the market asleep or very languidly talking.

But I now enter the market, jostling busy householders and careful housewives; all intent on laying in stores of the simple food which constitutes the staple diet of these Eastern races. Although it is not yet seven o'clock, every passage between the rows of stalls is quite crowded with busy purchasers, and progress in any direction is indeed difficult. The effluvia arising from the black mass is horribly pungent, and I know that as it clings to the person as tenaciously as the smell of tobacco, I shall smell like a native all the day long. This odorous infection is, alas, catching from every grade of Oriental society.

Turbaned salesmen, their wives and their children, are sitting asquat on the sloping board of their stalls, which are piled up with rice seeds, greasy sweets, onions and grains of all kinds. Here is a jar full of liquid treacle, there is a canister containing dreadful pastry, further on rows of oranges, carrots, turnips, lettuces and tempting tomatoes. In a corner I find baskets upon baskets of luscious mangoes, custard apples, melons, figs, and white grapes from Nassick. In the centre a pyramid of crockery-ware of English manufacture, outrivals in colour the pots, dishes and other utensils of argillaceous earth turned with the wheel with the usual simplicity of Oriental artificers. On one of the counters a fair spouse is fanning her master and lord, who dreamily sells his strings of silvery onions as he nods under the gentle breeze. A woman screams at me to buy a garland of flowers, a man offers me a tasteless bouquet, a dozen boys would willingly thrust tattered roses in my buttonhole. One little girl plagues me to purchase a chaplet of white jessamine strung together like beads. But as I do not intend to cast any votive flowers around the Brahminical bull, or to adorn my guests with Sylvan necklaces after my dinner, I refuse these floral offerings. Scores of naked urchins hang round the stalls begging decayed fruit too ripe to be sold, and on every counter betel and pan, arranged in green leaves and looking for all the world like queer soles, catches my eye.

To behold the manner in which everything is handled, pawed and smelt by the native previously to its being purchased would sicken all but persons of robust appetite. A Parsee woman thinks nothing of plunging her arm right up to the elbow in a clean basket of rice to test its depth and the quality of the grain. A Hindoo will feel a gourd all round and not finding it sufficiently ripe will leave it impressed with his finger-marks for the next unfortunate haggler. Salesmen hand you your purchase with greasy hands, your fruit wrapped up in soiled paper or slimy leaves. The copper change their wives offer you is usually previously wiped on the sarri, which does not appear to have been washed for a very considerable time. Yet for a native market the arrangements are most cleanly, and the frequent washing of the Caithness flags of the floor abundantly testifies to the zeal of the sanitary authorities.

But having at length satisfied myself that, as usual, my servants have cheated me, I leave the crowded enclosure to find my way to the open air part of the market. On such hot days as these are, which we are now having, it would be almost out of question to encounter the odour of the fish and meat market, so I dawdle along the huts occupied by the bird and beast fanciers. Just at my side are cages full of canaries, finches, or bright parrots, and the growl of a couple of leopard cubs sounds from a chink in a hutch. A diminutive jackal yelps in his kennel, and a

couple of snakes are asleep in a sandal-wood box. In the seclusion of his dark cabin a chameleon is changing his spots to the amusement of a dusky monkey from Matheran. The stupid mongoose waddles over the seed-strewn gravel before a weary nilghai straining on its silken chain and impatiently beating its painted hoofs. Hedgehogs, prickly porcupines, tortoises and the wild cat are running round and around their cages contributing to the general din. There is the peep-ee-yah who sings so enchantingly during the night at the commencement of the rains, when its lays are said to cause the old wounds of love to bleed afresh. And then see what a multitude of languishing doves and bulbuls are here on sale for zenana ladies.

Yonder vendors sit in tailor fashion before their modest stores spread on the ground, sugar-cane, glasses, gaudy gewgaws, satin scarves. Under a shrub a Parsee presides over his fermented liquors which his race were the first to introduce in the Empire, and he illumines the long rows of bright bottles full of arrack, sack, toddy and maira at night with yellow smoking dips of tallow or by a wick swimming in oil contained in a cocoa-nut shell. A group of maimed beggars now flock around me, and I have to make my escape out of the market with all the energy I can muster. As no European here ever carries a parcel if he is well enough off to get it carried for him, I engage a male coolie, who follows behind me with

my modest purchases. At the entrance gate a policeman in blue, wearing the curious yellow round cap, salaams me and then stands at attention till I have passed him, when he relapses into his indolent flirtation with a Moslem woman.

The portion of the market which is covered in is gradually thinning of its dense crowd, but the supply of provisions will keep on throughout the day. Towards evening the electric light will lustreously shine, illumining the provisions, the many boot and shoe shops, the hatters' and lamp vendors' stalls under the arcades. But at nine o'clock the gates will be closed, and the mart will be left in the undisputed possession of the police, of the sweepers, and of the water-carriers who cleanse it and throw water from their water-skins all over the floor.

LETTER XX.

THE NATIVE TOWN.

TUESDAY, 19TH JUNE, 1883.

BOMBAY.

WHAT life! what a multitude of people elbow each other in the native town, whose suburbs ever resemble ant hills. In its streets one meets a crowd scarcely less dense, though far more picturesque than one is accustomed to find in our busy metropolitan thoroughfares. A passing religious procession, a wedding party will attract groups as large as those which in London gather together to see a gas-pipe mended, or a broken-down cab.

With its tall roofs, sloping eaves, barbaric borders of colour, house after house attracts the attention of the wayfarer. How beautiful are these golden pillars shining in the morning sun, how quaint these innumerable projections be-

daubed with every hue of the palette of the native artist. Assuredly the decorator of this mansion must have possessed rare skill to wed these discordant reds and greens, and to make so pretty a border around yonder casement; and picked out in every imaginable tint hundreds of windows look down upon you, and the many irregularities of the buildings make the vista of the streets resemble some ancient mediæval Italian town or a Jewish Ghetto.

Carts, carriages, tumbrils, vehicles of every description keep up one constant flow of traffic throughout the day in the principal arteries of the city. Drivers shout out to foot passengers to get out of the road, addressing them either by the name of the occupation they appear to be busied in, or by the appellation of the headgear they happen to wear. With no pavement to have recourse to the native makes himself small near the wall to let the carts pass him, and distracted women run hither and thither, in their terror forgetting to cover their faces. Indeed progression in any direction would be out of question were it not for the singular skill with which the Oriental picks his path through a dense crowd, without jostling or coming in contact with other passers-by.

Several streets are entirely set apart to one especial trade, in others very miscellaneous business is carried on. Thus in one thoroughfare nothing but cotton goods can be bought, in

another only furniture, in a third earthen vessels or chatties. These localities are usually called bazaars, to distinguish them from places where a dusky artisan of copper pots may be found next door to the lamp-selling Parsee, in close proximity to a native bookseller, and just opposite a shop crammed with baked and painted idols. The indigenous image seller will occasionally be seen carrying on his business under the same verandah as the merchant in rough homespun cloth, heaped up promiscuously with the many-tinted products of Europe.

The ground floor of most of the houses constitutes the place of commerce, and in a recess often not larger than a closet, the merchant sits cross-legged, surrounded by his curious wares. The little cell is destitute of anything like windows or doors; small niches in the walls often contain tiny images of Hindoo gods, and a number of characters and designs are stamped on the plaster. You enter the emporium by a flight of steps leading from the street to the stall, or you pull yourself up on the raised floor by the aid of a rope, and then commence to view the whole stock-in-trade. After endless chatter and bargaining, during which the merchant's assistant automatically fans you with a fan of palm-leaf, you possibly walk off with your purchase borne on the shoulders of the male or the head of the female coolie who forms a part of every commercial establishment, and whom you are expected to pay.

The charming little gems and magnificent tissues in which Indian artists have from time immemorial luxuriated, play sad havoc with the occidental cash-box.

In the greengrocers' shops scores of baskets are piled up in ascending rows, full of different fruits and grains, whilst in the corner the favourite pan sopari of the native is exhibited on a sloping board. Here low-class men are ever found squabbling over their purchases with the filthy saleswomen, or flirting with the many females who usually lounge in every conceivable attitude before the frontages, daubed like draught-boards, with squares and circles of tawdry colour. Dim and dismal stalls, dark within, and crowded with nude urchins, crawling around fallen peels or rotten fruit, and teased to despair with swarming flies. Little lamps of oil hang alongside pendant bunches of plaintain, mango, or other fruits, to be lighted at night over the decorations of tissue paper. Sugar candy on strings, and highly flavoured with roses, doled out to the purchaser with a deceitful balance, is devoured by him with a schoolboy's avidity. Of the life led by these traders one forms a dim conception as one lifts up one's eyes to the dilapidated first floors of the mansion, from whose broken-down verandah the cotton gown forming the principal article of the Hindoo female's attire, hangs out to air, whilst their ladyships, in a bare, fetid room, are busied in cleaning their babies from teeming vermin.

But what a contrast to these dark, dismal abodes are the sumptuous places of business of the Marwarees or native money-lenders. Coloured lamps, looking-glasses, mirrors, ay, even rich carpets, occasionally bedeck the Eastern Shylock's trafficking stall. Reclining supine at full length, or sitting tailor-wise on white or coloured mattresses, with his back cosily wedged in a pile of gaudy silk pillows, surrounded by his many clerks, seated asquat diminutive mats, the usurer pores over his many accounts, tots up his multifarious ledgers. In these he records with all the minuteness of the Hindoo bookkeeper the very various loans required by the most borrowing people upon the face of the earth. Succoo, the coolie, now receives a few rupees at cent. per cent. to enable him to turn out his deceased father as a respectable corpse, and to incremate him decorously. A pittance is dealt out to Buchoobai to permit her to celebrate the marriage ceremonies of little Gungadhur, as becomes his caste. Anon a Mussulman negotiates a small loan to pay off yonder band of professional female mourners who are silently beating their bosoms in front of his door for the loss of his son. This mild and phlegmatic Parsee has come to pay off a sum borrowed for the betrothals of his little girl, with her hair worn in pigtail fashion in a plait down her back, who is looking about with a kind and merry expression. Though well known to be as relentless as his European countertype, such is

Shylock's plausibility that he even forces his loans on the occidental at ruinous rates of interest with the most seductive address. Hard as the metal he fingers, his soul is responsive alone to the sound of gold, and his heart softens only when he is fingering the uncut jewels or the rich gems of his debtors.

Numerous also are the native dispensaries, often crowded with patients awaiting treatment for elephantiasis, ophthalmia, foot and mouth sores, and the many skin diseases peculiar to the East. The native Kabiraj and Hakim are still as firmly believed in as they ever were, and one may yet hear a child exhorted to repeat charms to cure him from phthisis, or a woman recommended to take serpent's blood to ease her of colic. Undethroned by the European practitioner and the native graduates of the Grant Medical College, the barber is still the favourite surgeon of the races of Asia, and he still sets bones or makes incisions without the slightest knowledge of anatomy or of the kindred sciences. But, like many of his betters, he clothes ignorance under garrulity, and when he accidentally effects an easy cure he makes the most of it by parading the convalescent patient about in his surgery, which, with its old-fashioned *materia medica*, resembles a witch's den. Around him are gathered a circle of wondering gabies, who with wide-mouthed wonder listen to his account of marvellous preparations, by which he can graft the foot of a

duck on a cock, and bring the dead to life again. He best knows how to exploit the gross ignorance, the stupid credulity of the crowd with orvietan and miraculous balms of prepotent powers.

Over the better classes of warehouses one is often startled to find a blue signboard, on which, in white letters six inches long, the merchant has inscribed his titles of honour. These C.S.I.'s and C.I.E.'s, so excessively cherished by the native, are as glaringly exhibited as the Royal Arms over our Regent Street shops. If their happy possessor has any academical degree or faculty one will be also duly apprised of it. Her Majesty and the native universities have little conception of the exuberant joy which swells in the native merchant's breast when he is able to place half the alphabet after his already lengthy first name and family names. Honours do not, however, appear to overturn his mental calibre, for I find him just as keen in calculating the huge cotton bales rolled out of his godowns, and in estimating the probable prices which the packages of cardamon, lac dye, and myrabolons now toiling off in his bullock-waggons will fetch in the market, as if he had remained an untitled and unacademical nobody.

Brilliantly - coloured pagodas, daubed with strange representations of gods and goddesses, invite the pious wayfarer within their tawdry walls. Larger and wealthier shrines jangle their Brahminical bells, and resound with the deafening din of religious ululation or Vedic chant. Under

lintels overlaid with little figures of the Hindoo Pantheon, richly-dressed women pass in and out to offer vows to the merry Krishna, or to wander home after calling on Lakshmi. The sybaritical priest, whose face, breast, and neck resemble the plump, yellow rump of a fat goose, with eyes closed, smiling and breathing loudly, has a face as resplendent as one of the elect as he invites worshippers into his shrine. In paved and pillared courts, Moorish in style, semi-circular rows of Hindoos, with bent heads but standing upright, listen to the sing-song prayers of the Purohita, and gaze on the gilded idols. The mosques are filled with white-turbaned Mahommedans, bending their heads to the earth and beating their breasts in silent contrition. Pinnacles and strange architectures shoot their white stonework into the blue ether, but few of these lace-like structures merit notice, and none boast of beauty.

The Arab horsedealers' stables are far more congenial haunts to our countrymen than these Hindoo or Moslem shrines. Here, under many sheds, resembling the lines of a cavalry squadron, prance the horses of Arabia, the waler, the English-bred horse chiefly bought by the native. Many a milk-white steed will soon be purchased at a fabulous price by up-country Rajahs, who cherish the light coat which shows off rich trappings and saddlery embossed with knobs of silver and gold to such perfect advantage. This white mare is already the property of a Nawab, and he

has ordered her tail to be dyed with red and orange-colour, and her mane plaited with silk and ribbons interspersed with filigree roses. Diminutive ponies are anxiously bargained for either for driving or for polo; this tattie is said to face a boar without flinching, and this galloway is a first-rate racer. The Parsee, who wears out a stud every six months by his furious driving, is, you may feel perfectly sure, a good customer to the keen and unscrupulous dealer. Horses in India are seldom employed for the pack or draft, and all the animals on show at these establishments are either intended for riding or driving.

Returning from these stables, one falls in with every imaginable race of the East. The lascivious Persian, in his strange head-gear, dirty, and clothed in green robes; the Arab, tawny, dignified, agile as a cat, in loose burnoose, the true son of the desert; the Mahomedan, smoking his pipe in Asiatic repose with calm and dignity in a picturesque booth; the Chinaman, pig-tailed, blear-eyed, busy intriguer, alternately cross one's vision. Hundreds of females move rapidly past, dressed in every hue of the rainbow; bullock-carts, tramways, carriages rumble along; policemen, dressed in yellow or red caps, walk off with indocile malefactors to the nearest stations. By the edge of the pavement, seated tailor fashion, low-caste women sell sugar canes, coolies vend indigestible sweets, and the itinerant pedlar displays the contents of his bright-coloured packs.

The coppersmiths are beating their refulgent pots and pans with deafening din, barbers are performing all the operations of their trade on Hindoos and Moslems, motionless as wig blocks, or shaving decrepit old men, or curling the hair of street fashionables. Jobbing tailors are patching and mending old clothes, the dyers spread their magnificent clothes out to dry over their balconies, and at every street corner, seated in the midst of the crowd, women fan their charcoal fires, and apply sticks one by one to the household cauldron. If it is day, a myriad umbrellas, blue, red, green, and of the most vivid yellow, glitter down the vistas of the streets; if it is night, a legion of twinkling lights coruscate from every stall. A recent influx of strangers, driven by tyrannical rule from Cambay, adds unusual animation to the thoroughfares. The European is much struck with the entire absence of butchers' shops.

And very beautiful do the tall houses look on a moonlight night. Fragile edifices as they mostly are, one might easily fancy one's self perambulating through a great city reared by the art of a master in gigantic scenic panorama. The sleeping shadows nestle under the picturesque, but unsubstantial-looking balconies; a soft, pale light shimmers over the red tiles of the roofs, so carelessly set. Strings of dried leaves suspended over domestic thresholds or across the streets, to denote that a god once visited there, flutter in the

tepid night breeze. Calling fiercely on their deity, parties of natives make wild cymballing music in the booth so lately devoted to commerce, but now devoted to extemporary prayer and vigorous shouts. In many a courtyard, nautch girls give the last look to their toilets, and then step up the steps of the brilliantly-lighted houses of their terpsichorean patrons. Seated at her door, rouged painted and bathed, the native courtesan hails the passer-by as she slyly points to the couch draped in mosquito curtains within her poor apartment. Oil lamps, arranged on wire stands, glare before the entrances of the native theatres ; native women pass in with white shawls over their heads, yellow flowers in their black hair. Baboos and Parsee husbands have already entered in, preceding their spouses, carrying palmetto fans in their hands and the book of the play stuck in the cummerbund. Most of the shops have been closed up with slight and thin shutters, and above stairs, through the open windows, one can see the merchant and his family preparing for bed amidst a blazing illumination of lamps and oil butties. Belated wayfarers, muffled up to the eyes, stealthily pass along like sheeted ghosts ; empty bullock carts crawl about in vain searching for fares ; the sweet-sellers return homewards, the baskets they carry on the head being illuminated with a tiny tallow dip. A hundred fires blaze from iron crescents, and Bengal lights cast coloured shades over the somnolent houses as with terrific din the

marriage procession gleefully passes on to the bridegroom's home, resplendently illuminated with multi-coloured oil lamps. In evening dress our countrywomen drive past with their husbands, either returning from balls or dinner parties. Our English sisters wear no wraps, no cloaks, no hats, but drive from an entertainment just as they enter a ball-room or leave it. And as they behold the Saxon beauty drive past in low evening dress, her arms bare, unveiled, and *debonnaire*, is it a wonder that the native women, leaning out of the casements to eat the night air, and shrouded up to the eyes from mortal view, should withdraw their heads within their apartments, shocked beyond measure that Englishmen only bring their temple dancers out here?

Meanwhile over the city, in the cloudless blue ether, a moon, large as the sun in Europe, sheds her silvery light.

LETTER XXI.

A COTTON MILL.

THURSDAY, 21ST JUNE, 1883.

BOMBAY.

THE sound of throstle, mule, and carding engine greeted me as I passed under the entrance gate of one of Bombay's largest spinning and weaving mills. The obliging Parsee gatekeeper at once showed himself ready to cicerone me over the massive manufactory which, painted in yellow, barred with white stripes, rose four storeys high. Amplitudinous as our barracks at home, roofed with tiles, provided with as many windows as the Escorial, its aspect was as commercially oppressive as the extensive mills of Lancashire.

A preliminary walk around the courtyard and the compound inducted me into the storage of cotton in the warehouse or godown. I saw ready for mixing in these outbuildings, heaped up in great

mounds like unsullied snow, the products of Omravutte and Akola. The labouring natives, stripped to the waist, aided the ascent of the fluffy substance into the main building through the exhauster. At eight boilers, flaring and steaming, the Moslem firemen lustily stirred blocks of Cardiff coal with tongs and fireirons of English manufacture. A tank divided into compartments, much like a salt pan, is always kept filled up to the brim in case of a fire. On a pretty slope, a neat bungalow is set apart as a residence for the European engineers and mill-master.

Through the compound bullock carts were coming in with jingling noise, oscillating from side to side, each loaded with piles and bales of newly-bought cotton. We heard the heavy tramp of the oxen, the shout of the drivers, and saw them unharness the beasts, who began grazing under the tamarind trees. The horns of these animals were ornamented with the brightest of tassels, and bars and rings of vivid colour; their housings were both barbaric and splendid, and the spotted discs of black in the vermilion cloths were conspicuous. There was something almost pastoral-looking in this encampment of oxen, ruminating before the rows of unladen carts, which contrasted strongly with the adjoining mill.

But leaving this pleasing scene, I entered the main building, a pandemonium of noise. Room

succeeded room, disclosing vistas of innumerable twirling wheels, sliding bands, revolving shuttles, throstles, mules, roving and slubbing frames. Bobbins vertiginously revolved on innumerable steel needles, and cotton, dirty and gritty when placed at one end of the machine, fell out at the other whiter than salt. Soft, white substances, soft as eiderdown, were wrapped around rollers; masses of fluff flew about, and over steel plates, white materials slid like ice on a thawing stream. The countless threads hanging from all parts of the frames looked like the meshes of a colony of stupendous spiders.

The sizing-room, with its tubs of chemical mixture, was disagreeable to the olfactory nerves, and the din of the engine-room produced a temporary deafness. Picking one's way between the long rows of machines is no very easy matter, and more than once I was brought to a standstill before baskets where cotton, folded in skeins, or rolled like cocoons, was awaiting the next step of its manufacture into loin cloths. The filing and scraping of the repairing and smithy's department was diversified by the untiring hum of the jenny, and the whistle of the throstle and rotating bobbin, by the cadenced boom of the piston.

The native hands did not appear to suffer from the closeness of the atmosphere, and their condition struck me as more healthy than that of our British operatives. Sparing in diet, feeding on rice, abstaining almost entirely from intoxicants

and spirituous liquors, these temperate habits form their best safeguard in so torrid a climate as this. But a little breeze blew in at the open windows ; no filthy smell of drain or sewer greeted the nostril, and the floors were as scrupulously clean as the well-kept engines. I was struck with the careful arrangements made by the native millowners for the safety and welfare of their many *employés*.

The hardest and most difficult tasks are undertaken by adult men, who receive a wage averaging from ten to fifteen rupees a month. To them is entrusted the mixing of cotton, the superintendence of the engines, the loom, the slubbing frame. Wearing a loin cloth, a small round cap on the head, gentle, slightly built, they form the greatest contrast to our sturdy English artizans. Their jokes—and they have but few—are quiet, childish, and innocent ; their conversational powers are limited, and of oaths and blasphemy I heard not one word. Noiselessly and barefooted they move around the toiling frame, adjusting with an almost feminine delicacy of touch a thread that has slipped from the reel, or a skein wandering from its appointed groove. Pleased to display the functions of the machine under their guidance, they do so with none of the swagger and omniscience of the Lancashire hand ; the salaam is respectfully made, questions are answered respectfully. Of course all clamorous requests for a pot of beer is a thing non-existent out here ; but a

present of a few pice will rejoice their hearts with betel and pan.

Less arduous tasks fall to the lot of boys averaging from ten to sixteen years of age, and receiving from six to eight rupees a month. They also superintend spinning and weaving frames, gravely watch the rotating bobbin, the thread intertwined and plaited by needles of steel. Bright-eyed, the caste mark on the forehead, chewing betel and pan, they eye the Sahib, intensely amused at his visit, and zealous also to show the intricacies of their work. Nothing will satisfy them but to set one spinning, and as they watch the breaking yarn they leerily grin. I found them clean in their persons, and though their cloths were poor and patched, they were well washed and decently fastened. The rebellious spirit of the English lad forms no part of their mental characteristics, for they possess an almost feminine gentleness. The bracelets they wear do not appear to hinder their work, and their earrings are often prettily reflected in the bright flashing steel of the machines. Like most of the poorer classes in Bombay, a little cap replaces the more expensive and costly turban worn by the Clerk.

Women and girls toil together in rooms, from which the male is warned off by prohibitive notice boards. Here, as one enters, a general shuffling of saris over the face takes place, but the girls, though they look thoroughly honest, did not appear to me to be remarkably shy. Very picturesque do all

the dark faces look, with their flashing nose-rings and dangling ear-rings. It is pretty to see the long rows of soft brown arms playing on the throbbing reels and distended threads—to watch the bracelets on the heaving breasts, the anklets tinkling around the quick-moving feet. The coloured stuff of their garments, the white cotton they tend, their umbrellas of all colours hung overhead, are all wonderfully bright. The grace of attitude, the composure with which they move, the contrast between the dark skin, the raven black hair, and the fleecy cotton, forms a charming picture. Here, women seated on a heap of the lovely soft substance look like sombre deities apotheosed on a cloud, and yonder a tiny girl, with her dark hair tangled with white fluff, looks remarkably pretty.

The two thousand hands employed in this mill are all busied on piece or job work, this being the only plan as yet discovered for ensuring diligent labour from the ease-loving Hindoo. It is said they lack attention to their tasks, take but small pride in their work, are wanting in the energetic characteristics of the British artizan; and this seems most probably true. They receive their wages once in the month for the previous four weeks during which they have laboured. Strikes, I am informed, are unknown amongst them, and their gentleness and docility, as well as the national want of cohesion for any party purpose, will long preserve them from the noisy oratory of the Trades' Union. To politics they, like all the poorer classes

of India, are utterly indifferent; the words of liberty and patriotism are unmeaning to them. Religion is their only nationality, of public spirit they display the utter deficiency common to their countrymen. Were it not that coal and machinery must be imported from abroad, usually England, the mills here, paying a low rate of wages, and with large supplies of cotton quite close at hand, would soon under-sell the products of Lancashire throughout the world.

Happily the native operative has nothing of the jaded bestial look of too many of our English artizans. Yet his hours are long, for exclusive of an hour for dinner, they last from five in the morning till sunset; and mills owned by Parsees or Hindoos are sometimes open on alternate Sundays. His figure keeps erect, his shoulders are not rounded, his limbs horribly distorted. He is decent in behaviour, and, if not very progressive, has not the insolent swagger of the members of the Mechanics' Institutes of our Lancashire districts. These qualities he probably owes to his abstinence from spirits, his simple way of life, his national religious peculiarities. It pleases one when the dinner-bell rings to see them flock out in the compound, one sea of striving life. The men quietly sit apart, the boys play in front of them at their prisoner's base; the women, grouped together at an opposite extremity of the enclosure, quietly chatter. Nor do they seem to appear disinclined to return to their work when the brief hour has terminated.

And no less pleasant is it to watch them stroll off when the mill closes at night. Family groups, mothers, fathers, sons, all employed in the different spinning and weaving departments, are then re-united. Passionately fond of walking in single file, Hindoo women stroll off each behind the other, the oldest first, the youngest behind, looking for all the world like the descending rows of the pipes of an organ. The male precede the fair sex, accompanied by their masculine progeny, the wives and daughters bringing up the rear, their husband's or father's umbrellas tucked under their arms. On a Saturday barbers, asquat on their hams, take their stations by the mill doors to catch the operative desirous of a shampoo or of a shave. There may be seen groups of men sitting in the open street before the Eastern Figaro with lathered chins and locks dripping with cocoa-nut oil. Meanwhile the roads are crowded with artizan life, and the mill hands bearing brass lotahs slung across walking sticks begin trudging home.

Thus daily do the sons and daughters of India bend over throstle and mule. Piles of white and gay cloths grow under their hands, destined to go out to the extreme points of the earth. Bale after bale proves how enormous is the home consumption of a manufacture which constitutes the raiment of all the poorer and middle classes of the East. How strange, nevertheless, does it seem to behold the unprogressive Hindoo directing the last mechanical improvement on Arkwright's invention.

LETTER XXII.

MALABAR HILL.

FRIDAY, 22ND JUNE, 1883.

BOMBAY.

EVERY European who can afford it lives in Bombay on Malabar Hill. At once the healthiest part of the locality, and the most fashionable, the rents of the numerous bungalows average from rupees 150 to rupees 350 a month. This is too excessive a price for the holders of small incomes to pay, and consequently only the wealthy occidental, and the rich Parsee can afford to reside here. The Hindoo element is, with one or two exceptions, restricted to the neighbourhood of the tank, at Walkeshwar, which is situated on the extreme western point of the sea-girt promontory. The Governor has also a residence here, too small to be often inhabited, but beautifully placed on the shores of the ocean. Parel is, however, his

official abode when in Bombay, but for the hot season he moves to Mahableshtar, for the rains to Poona, during October to Matheran. The local society follow him; whithersoever he goes they go, like Ruth dancing attendance on Naomi.

The hill abruptly rises out of the perfectly level plain on which Bombay stands to an elevation of some one hundred and eighty feet. Its slopes are rugged with huge boulders of rock, which seem to threaten the passing wayfarer. Short scanty grass, parched at this season, springs up to tropical rankness during the rains, and clothes the rugged flanks with vivid green. Palm trees, the plaintain, and the cocoa-nut palm pleasantly relieve the volcanic aspect of the soil from its barrenness. Here a miniature quarry is overhung with soft yellow flowers; yonder masses of bramble give quite a jungly appearance to a tiny plateau, upon which a little bamboo cabin pleasantly stands perched up like an eagle's nest in its hedges of dusty cactus.

About four miles from central Bombay the Hill is reached, after a tedious drive. A long winding precipitous road leads to its summit, one passes a telegraph office, and several little shanties, where natives dwell by selling ananas, luscious fruits, and provisions to the residents around. Before the heaped-up baskets women are crouching asquat, and many an urchin with curiously-shaven head plays about in the road, or rolls in the dust. Numerous bullock carts filled with brightly-clad

natives struggle up as they can, the driver seated on the axle, pricking his gentle beasts with a goad, or twisting their tails to induce speed. The vehicle is usually covered with a hood to keep out the sun, and frequently within a space not larger than the smallest opera box one will see women, children, sons, and papas seemingly mixed in inextricable confusion. One takes to wondering to whom this dark arm with a gold bracelet can possibly belong to, if that little leg passed over the gaudily-painted sides of the carriage is yonder little boy's or little girl's. Imagine an Indian deity with his scores of heads, and his briarean number of arms, in a cart, and you will have a faint idea of one of these native family parties. The curtain is entirely held up to see the passing Sahib, and if one happens to look good-natured one will often receive a beautiful salaam from a tiny tot, to the immense amusement of the giggling women and happy papa. But the driver is much too engaged in racing other carts—a favourite native amusement—to notice the European as he goes past at full speed.

Arrived on the crest of the hill, bungalows in pretty compounds are situated on every side. Gardening is too troublesome in a climate like this to find much favour, nevertheless some of the flower beds are beautifully laid out with dark plants of every hue, creepers cling to the trees, and tall shrubs hang over the walls or iron rails, one mass of buds and falling petals. The gardeners

are too well looked after to permit of their floral treasures dying from thirst, and the leaves seem less cracked and withered by heat than they are elsewhere. The atmosphere is also less oppressive than down in the plain, and a refreshing breeze may usually be safely predicted to blow about noon.

There is certainly considerable uniformity in the appearance of these compounds closely adjoining each other on either side of the road that runs like a spine from end to end of the hill. One large circular flower bed, with a tree in its centre, rows of wooden tubs full of potted plants, unhealthy-looking turf, kept green with considerable trouble, seem common to all. Only the Parsee launches into variety, and his taste is usually as unnatural in his garden as in his house. Stiff wooden Sepoys exported from Europe dally in his gravel paths with multi-coloured pagods from China; his palings always look as if they had but just been painted, and his passion for light leads him even to place glass globes over his compound door and above his concrete yellow walls. One sees him stolidly strolling with his family or his friends, no doubt contemplating some monstrous embellishment. Maybe he is thinking of erecting an open-air fountain of marble to plash and scintillate all day long, or cogitating on an artificial aviary. His house—for he disdains bungalows—is usually an imposing edifice of two to three storeys high, crowded both inside and out with

mirrors, chandeliers, and glass balls of all colours. As one passes by at night the whole place seems in a blaze and rutilant with the red glare of a fire.

The hill covers a considerable area, and with Cumballa may be four or five miles in length, and half as broad. The ladies' gymkhana, or recreation ground, seated on its crest, becomes quite crowded towards the afternoon. Tennis and badminton are played within the enclosure, tea is handed around, gossip and scandal have their full fling. An occasional native peeps over the hedge, but the door-keeper warns him off, for the Byculla and Bombay Clubs are not more zealously guarded against the intrusion of people tinged with the slightest strain of dark blood than this sanctum of the British wife and her daughters. Well-appointed carriages belonging to our countrywomen wait on the road, two native footmen holding on to the open hood stand on a board at the back of the vehicle, the coachman sitting on the box solemnly flicks about with his whip. The liveries are various in colour and often handsome, the red turban, scarlet cummerbund, and blue frock coat predominate; but white costumes with deep gold lace, and a cream-coloured head-dress are also in vogue. As there is no society laying claim to aristocratic pretensions here, there is a noticeable absence of coats of arms on the carriage panels, and these decorations are almost exclusively left to the indigene. The judges, the members of the

Indian Civil Service, and their families constitute the *élite* of Bombay society, after which come the military authorities and the professions. Instead of the autocratic flunkey in periwig, plush breeches, and white stockings of English life, we catch a view of a sturdy native clothed in crimson cloth, turban, and sash of floss satin. The native coachman no more dreams of wearing thread gloves than a Hindoo lady, and he is as destitute of shoes as a Parsee girl of leg bangles.

And turn whichever way one may, the view is certainly splendid from the top of the hill. Looking south, Back Bay, with its crescent sweep, lies at one's feet, lapped by emerald waters slowly rolling on a long stretch of black and yellow shore. Far out to sea vessels steam past, sending a just perceptible stream of their smoke into the air. Nearer inland, native craft ride at anchor, the lateen sails reefed around the diagonal spars, the keels newly careened and painted dark brown. Immediately below me barges full of wood are being unloaded by women and coolies, whilst the little babes croon on the sands. Bullocks at mid-day are led down to be bathed; they rush into the waves, and pleasantly snort, with their horned heads and pointed humps alone protruding out of the ocean. Busily, relentlessly, are they rubbed down by their naked proprietors, who twist their tails and swim them about by the aid of the bridle passing through the throbbing nostrils, whilst the beasts' jewelry of tufts of cotton adorned with

glass beads and brass ornaments shimmers on the hot beach. A rich Hindoo cow will now and again be majestically led down, and as this animal is adored and well fed, the care with which she is bathed puts one in mind of the solicitude expended for the comfort of the King of Siam's white elephants and erewhile shown to Caligula's horse.

But to the right hand the enclosure of the Parsee Towers of Silence frown from a rocky, uninhabited slope. A plaitain here and there lifts its spiked leaves over the long paved passage through which the Zoroastrian dead come to their rest, and which is now tenanted by lizards careering over the scorching and slippery stones. A clump of elegant palms growing in a whitewashed enclosure scarcely shade the white graves of the Mahommedan race. Pleasant little railway stations carry the eye on as far as Bombay, which at present seems reverberant with the heat. A thatched roof, a temple, a thousand bungalows almost hidden by foliage, tell one that one is looking down on busy Girgaum, and following the curve of the bay, the eyes, now grown dim with the glare, rest on glittering Kolaba and its flashing sea.

But so soon as sight is sufficiently restored, one turns to the south, to the illimitable waves and limitless sea. The hill rapidly slopes to the rocky shores, a few roads here and there passing a small English church, intersect the rough

flanks, and many a bungalow nestles on the palm-covered declivities of this tropical garden. Some of the domestic establishments are very large here, for instance yonder Parsee's, into which I gaze down. At least a score of carriages are being washed in his yard, partly his own and partly his friends', for, fond of sociability, the Sabeian likes numerous visitors provided they be of his caste. Plump, far heavier in build than the Hindoo, what a contrast are these Fire-worshippers now riding by in their comfortable carriage to this attenuated juggler, toiling along with his wicker-work baskets, his cobra and small stock-in-trade.

Suddenly a jee, or maid-of-all-work, hails him, and walks him peremptorily off to show his tricks to two Parsee ladies who are lazily reclining on long chairs in the shade of a tamarind tree. In vain I have often asked myself wherefore the Sabeian girl, so fragile, dark-lidded, and divinely soft-looking until she reaches sixteen, should develop after that age into rotund coarseness and puffiness, but, as I see the heaps of provisions borne into the compound, I fancy my riddle is answered. Alas! the Zoroastrian is a coarse feeder; he sweeps off all the best fish from the market, is a bit of a glutton, a cosmopolitan gastronomist, and as the uncontrolled management of his house by national custom devolves on his wife, this good lady and her daughters vie in greediness with the house-master. The dark

little Cooverbai, whose yellow sarri set your heart in a flutter, will probably at twenty develope aldermanic corpulency, and her step, no longer like the gait of the Phenicopteros, will resemble the tread of a baggage elephant. Add to this deformity that at thirty Oriental women are already wrinkled and old, and your charmer, whose liquid eyes set you thinking of silk ladders and angry husbands, and maybe a good licking on the face with the shoe, will in fourteen years hence pass as perfectly unheeded by you as if she were a low coolie woman.

But I now turn around and look over the Indian Ocean, and as I do so my thoughts are busied with old England and old English friends. What can these dear folks be possibly doing, I wonder, as I sit here, sweltering, wiping my face with a handkerchief wringing wet with perspiration, and irritated to madness by the prickly heat that covers my person. Are you cosily sitting in the grand old bow windows, wrapped up in slight shawls, enjoying the fresh air of early summer, perhaps still in your plaids? Ah! what would I not give for a dry skin, a feeling of cold, just for one wholesome shiver. But the thought of cold is too tantalising to dwell upon, and I must walk off before the electric light is lit on the hill, or I shall be late for dinner.

LETTER XXIII.

AN INDIAN BUNGALOW.

SATURDAY, 23RD JUNE, 1883.

BOMBAY.

LUCY'S bungalow stands in a large compound on the summit of a raised mound, edged off with stony concrete. The roof of thick thatch is overgrown with a beautiful creeper, now drooping down with its wealth of purple buds. Cyclamen, China roses, and asters cling around the verandah pillars, and in dark blue tubs, circled with hoops, exotic plants wave in symmetrical rows their lustrous satiny foliage. The banyan tree, the neem, and the peepul, planted in the angles of the front garden, cast their friendly shade over the front rooms, and at the back, beds of tall ferns and clumps of palms grow alongside a hedge which has flowered as if with tongues of red flame.

The verandah is paved with chunam, and covered with matting, plaited in convict cells in the Andaman Isles. Tatties and reed blinds shut out the heat, so that one can walk all around the domicile as if in cool cloisters. But one has to perambulate with care around the many chairs of every possible kind, sofas, and comfortable ottomans. The latest novels are littered about, and a half-finished letter flutters around the spittoon. Here birds of exotic plumage are asleep on the perches of the gilded cage. Further on the punkah pullers are pulling the ropes as they peacefully sleep. Suddenly one of the English nurses comes in dancing the last etiolated little babe in her arms. Then, if you please, she screams out and claps her hands for her ayah, for when Sarah Jane comes out to Hindostan, she must, of course, be waited upon by her own personal native servant. The English groom has also his swarthy attendant to fetch his cheroots and to mix his whiskies and sodas.

Every window of the bungalow is open to catch the faintest breeze. The doors are constructed like the glass doors of France, and are rarely shut in the hot season. They are fitted with lattice shutters, workable either to admit the light or to keep out the sultry glare.

The building has but one single floor, and all the rooms lead one into the other. The locks, bolts, and bars of England are non-existent here, for we all live in public. Any person may stroll in, and pass through bedchambers, bath-rooms,

toilet-rooms, and drawing-rooms, without opposition from material obstacles. A screen of red silk swings on a hinge and covers the openings leading into the various rooms, the top and bottom of these apertures being left uncovered for the circulation of air. The punkah hangs in every apartment, and is pulled by a rope running across the room, passed through the wall and pulled from outside on the verandah.

This huge fan, so essentially necessary to the comfort of the Anglo-Indian, is constructed by suspending a plank across the room in which it is meant to be swung by ropes nailed to the ceiling. Gallant efforts are frequently made by our countrywomen to redeem the hideous appearance of this Oriental article of furniture. In the bedrooms I notice the plank is covered with pretty brown holland, and long fringes so necessary to circulate the pulsations of air. The dining-room punkah is clad in red silk with heavy vallances of bullion braid. The drawing-room fan is gaudily attired in rich Dacca silk, relieved with bunches of embroidered flowers. This is quite new, and a welcome substitute for the plank one usually sees swaying to and fro, which looks for all the world like the front of a grand piano, for it has a background of scarlet silk covered with japanned fretwork in wood.

Inasmuch as Bombay is considered too hot for the exercise of individual taste, the selection of the drawing-room suite is usually left to the

Parsee broker from whom it is hired. Thus it happens that everyone's furniture seems made from the same model and that the same kind of walnut chiffoniers, the same carved footstools, basket chairs, and small ottomans are discoverable in every household. Moreover we all certainly hope to be but birds of passage here, and do not care, therefore, to invest in goods not readily saleable on quitting the place of our exile. A few fans arranged on the walls, a landscape in water colours of English scenery, a jade pagod or two, a china plate nailed to the unpapered wall, usually exhaust the æsthetic predilections of the Anglo-Indian householder. Happily the good friends I am now staying with are not satisfied to rest here. The chairs are high art, the blotters are of ivory, covered with many-headed gods, the tables are in the best style of Oriental inlaying. Handsome Japanese figured jars stand by the doors, diminutive muslin curtains droop in rich folds from the cornices, and the antimacassars are marvels of beautiful work.

In the early morning we take chota hazri in our own rooms, a cup of coffee or tea, biscuit or thin slices of bread and chalky-white butter. At ten we breakfast on excellent pomphlet, on other fish, and many a dainty dish. Shortly after the cloth is removed the master drives off to his office in his well-closed brougham, the ladies chatter awhile over the local newspapers, and open the letters the early post brings them. The children

are heralded in by Sarah Jane, the ayahs appear to give an account of baby's sleep, the bearers have to hand round the infants for the usual matutinal kiss. Then our hostess departs to inspect her numerous household departments, and to look into the dinner list her steward hands her. The dhobie or washerman appears with his pack of clean linen, the khitmugar or butler receives his orders, the head syce comes to know at what time the Mem Sahib will drive, and what ponies her daughters intend to honour. The hamals, or punkah pullers are set more briskly at work, the puttiwalla, or messenger runs off to the post, bheesties or water-carriers arrive with their stores of water in tough coloured skins, and along the roads on the heads of women and girls we see our provisions for dinner slowly arrive. Numerous as this domestic staff is, it is nothing to what would be necessary in a house at Calcutta, for caste restrictions are very loose in Bombay to what they are in Bengal, and one servant here often deigns to fulfil two occupations.

Between eleven and two our hostess receives her visitors or goes out to call. At two we take tiffin, soup, meat, and plenty of curry. Novel-reading, painting, etching, and sleeping whiles the hours away till five, when we take an evening ride or go out to shop or to the fashionable cathedral service. Often the band at the Bunder or on the Esplanade seduces us, and we spend a pleasant half-hour listening to the melody of native or Saxon instrumentation. Then about

seven, as fast as two good horses can take us, we return home to dress for eight o'clock dinner. The ladies attire themselves in full evening toilet, the men in swallow-tails and white cravats. Woe to the unhappy mortal who appears in white linen clothes at a dinner table here, for he will certainly be put down as a savage and ostracised.

The servants move round the hospitable board in their picturesque dress, and every person at table is waited upon by his own boy. The conversation is not much worth listening to. It dwells much on business, speculates on the chances of such and such an official's promotion, and scarcely ever touches on European politics or artistic topics. It is far too sultry to be talkative. Wit—had we it—would be thrown away on a lethargic audience, and really people who are all judicially dining like valetudinarians cannot be expected to be profound or brilliant with a thermometer marking over 90 degrees. It requires a very racy scrap of scandal to keep even the feminine tongue wagging for a few minutes, and after the exertion Lady Sneerwell helplessly sinks into her chair. With a sigh of relief, we at length push the finger glasses away, and rise from the funereal, stiff, and lugubrious entertainment hot, but immensely relieved it is over. And a bachelors' party is scarcely more lively unless we exclude the astonishing gymnastic feats over arm-chairs and sofas that take place after dessert and before the first peg.

As none of the ladies object to the smoke of our

cheroots, we also adjourn to the verandah. The lovely moonlight of the east is, perhaps, shedding its silvery rays on palm, tamarind, and mango tree. A sibilant breeze sets each fluttering leaf in responsive motion, and our brows are at length cool, our throbbing pulses less angry. Under the sheeny light the eyes alternately wander from the huts occupied by the native domestics to the stables where the horses are sleeping. A jackal howls in the distance just as the house watchman appears bearing his stout staff and a bull's-eye lantern. See how yonder vulture gyrates in the sky, hark how the crickets chant in the long dried grass resembling fields of over-ripe corn. We hear the distant clangour of native music, the neigh and lowing of the heat-oppressed animal world. Soothed by the witchery of the hour, the full-orbed moon, the sky spangled with lustrous stars, we fall into our easy-chairs to dose by the side of our languid countrymen. Nautches amongst Europeans are thing of the past; we live far more morally than at home, are intensely respectable, and go to bed early. Few men keep native women, and when they do the strict decorum our English married women have introduced in the social circle causes these individuals to be tabooed. The style of manners in Bombay is frigid, intensely ceremonious, the antipodes to the easy hospitality of our Australian colonists.

LETTER XXIV.

THE BURNING GROUND.

SUNDAY, 24TH JUNE, 1883.

BOMBAY.

A BREEZE came up from over the sea, the heavens coruscated with stars, and the silvery moonlight made every object distinct as at noon-day. Not a cloud dimmed the intense blue depths of the sky; the waves came quietly up to the beach, and long tracks of light shed by a rising moon lay over the phosphorescently glowing masses of water. As distinct as if carved in ivory on a miniature, the Clock Tower and buildings of Bombay lay far to my right, whilst to the left the hilly slopes of Malabar Hill glistened and soughed with rustling foliage. I gazed into a walled enclosure, over the roofs of a long row of sheds, towards an entrance gate erected near pretty clambering creepers. In the enclosure a human body was slowly burning; and the smoke curled fantastically skywards. A distant bell sounded a knell, and, like a sob, the sound died on the ground.

The corpse, daubed with paint of the brightest

red, was extended at full length on the funeral pyre. Four iron posts supported a kind of roofing over the body, and this cover, attacked by the flame, shed around myriads of sparks. The burning pile, built of sweet-smelling sandal wood saturated with ghee and precious oils, made me feel certain that the deceased must have been a rich man. These costly disinfectants also assured me that I assisted at the cremation with safety from any contagion.

Somewhat above the middle height there he lay, supine in the ruddy glow. A bright-coloured roseate column of smoke floated upwards at the puff of the breeze. Thanks to the unguents, spices, and balms plentifully sprinkled over the wood it was not inodorous to the nostril.

With difficulty wild-looking natives now and again approached the corpse to feed the funeral pyre with fresh sandal-wood, spices and ghee. Pursued by the flying showers of sparks they were often compelled to beat a hasty retreat, being scalded on foot, shoulder, and thigh. With hands uplifted before the eyes to shield them from the intense glare they watched the falling sticks, the igniting crackling wood, the sap spuming on the logs, the accumulating ashes and cinders. In the weird light one might well have imagined them to be larvae and ghouls of the sublunary empire busied in some hellish task. Exhilarated by their strange functions, they appeared greatly excited.

The feet of the deceased had scarcely yet been.

attacked by the flame, but the long, lanky arms were already charred: Tongues of fire had burnt thorax and chest, and seized the arm-pits. The hands hung at the extremity of the blackened and fleshless bones, most ghastly to look upon. The eyes were wide open, stonily fixed on a neighbouring group of whispering palms. There must have been a terrible death struggle, for the mouth was depressed and contorted, and the features wore a look of intense agony. Sparks had calcined the curiously-shaven head, upon which they burnt like bright lucioles on a sombre night. As the flame gathered strength through the volume of ruddy smoke the corpse became less distinguishable. A disc of rosy light shone around the funeral pyre like the trembling circle of light which dances around the forge of a smithy.

At the head of the corpse stood the chief mourner, a youth of about seventeen. The torch with which he had lighted his ancestor's pyre had burnt out in his hands, and still smouldered as, inverted, he held it down to the ground. Vivid lights and deep shadows passed over his features, and his forehead was sprinkled with beads of perspiration, occasioned by the fierce heat. Smothered in smoke, doubtless annoyed by the unsavoury odours of burning flesh, he seemed to be on the point of fainting. His mouth was agape, but no sound passed his lips; his turban was carelessly folded, but his tunic was carefully worn. His eyes were partially closed, as if he were suffering pain, and he moved his feet rest-

lessly to and fro, as one does when suffering from fever.

On his either side two little boys clutched his garments, with wild looks of horror. Most probably they assisted at a cremation for the first time, and their dead sire was the first corpse they had yet looked upon. The flames, the uncanniness of the scene, had chased sleep from their eyes, and they looked scarcely less scared than one who, distempered with horror, suddenly starts and groans in a nightmare. Terror forbade of their weeping, the lips and eyes were contracted as if to cry, but terror had dried up the healing flood. I feared that in such a condition of mental anguish their intellects might be affected, and, indeed, something very like the idiot's grin had gathered around the mouth of the youngest child. Unable to keep their eyes fixed elsewhere than on the corpse, their breaths were drawn in, and they appeared less motionless than the vibrating shadows behind them. The pretty silk frocks dripped with the night dew, the little bare arms and necks were uncovered to the night air, and I fancied I detected in the little forms signs of incipient consumption. Dissimilar in dress, in attire, in nationality, yet I found this trio scarcely less interesting than the group of the Laocoon.

In the background, arranged in a half-moon, stood the deceased's relatives and his friends, wearing the bright headdress, the snowy raiment, and peaked shoes of Gujerat. Erect, sombre-

visaged, many of them possessed an almost martial appearance, so keen were their black eyes, so fierce were their moustaches, and so haughty was their attitude. Every one of them a high caste man, their bearing was singularly noble, and they more or less all seemed to possess that ease of manner which is supposed by our western world to be acquired only by the frequentation of high-class society, but which often comes to the Hindoo spontaneously. I have never yet seen such decorous behaviour save at a military funeral, when elderly officers, bareheaded, stand beside a loved comrade's grave whilst the volleys are fired. Indeed, the Asiatic has often a dignity so supreme that the least imitation of it would degenerate into caricature. The classical nature of his garments, no doubt, heightens the native majesty of his demeanour and gestures.

But the Gujerathi and especially the Mahratta type of face, seems to me to have something singularly vulpine about it. The keen aquiline nose, the sparkling eyes, have too much of the hawk to be altogether pleasant to contemplate. And amongst these relatives, I fancied there were many who gloated on the three youths as if scenting an easy prey at the mercy of unscrupulous tutors and unconscionable guardians. I put up a silent prayer that they might have a mother alive, endowed with the deceased's wealth, and sufficiently independent to defend them against every species of rapine. Several of the robes of the funeral guests appeared artificially disarrayed,

and their grief, as anyone could easily see, was assumed for the occasion, and purely conventional. Eminent actors in private life, as all Hindoos are, they had assumed an expression of face befitting the occasion. Now sorrowful, to-morrow they would find it as easy to appear jubilant, and would out-laugh the genuinely joyful. A native, indeed, changes his moods to suit his surroundings with the ease with which a chameleon changes his colours.

A few Brahmins, wild and dishevelled, walked around the corpse amidst smoke and flame, and songsters called upon Yama, the King of Death. Another group stationed near the now burning feet, beat cymbals vigorously, and rang tiny hand-bells. This melody, unlike the slow movement of our funeral music which the western ear is accustomed to, was very quick and of deafening din. It was an uproar to frighten ghosts rather than a dirge to uplift the soul on her heavenly journey. The instrumentalists, drunk as with wine by the furious sound, seemed more like Bacchanalian satyrs, rampant and mad, than performers of exsequial music. Nautch girls dancing around a basket do not make so much noise as they clap their hands, chant, and rattle their bracelets.

No women were present, for even the widow did not attend. Since suttee is forbidden and she cannot be burnt, she is usually regarded as a useless accessory, to be dispensed with if possible. Since she may no longer be incriminated with her lord, what good could she derive by seeing him

burnt. But so various and divergent are the customs of the many castes, that I should not like to predicate that this enclosure is not occasionally crowded with tearful widows, revelling in all the ostentatious parade of Oriental woe. I believe at Calcutta the bereaved wife always stands beside the pyre after having dipped herself in the Ganges.

I pass over in silence the frequent anointing of the flame with ghee, honey, and other rich substances. I also leave unrecorded ceremonies wearisome as the recapitulation of the marriage rites of the Hindoos. Suffice it to say the deceased's heart was plucked from the flame, carefully wrapped up, and consigned to his heir. A few ashes were collected which probably his widow, during some pilgrimage, will fling from a burning ghat at Benares, or from the banks of the Nerbudda, upon the waters of a holy flood. By the fire all the other portions of the body were doomed to be consumed. But so tardily did the incremation progress, that it seemed very doubtful if the flesh would be resolved into the elements by the break of dawn. Notwithstanding plentiful and recurring supplies of sandal-wood, the flame borne from the pyre by the breeze, as often flared in the empty air as it did around the corpse.

How much longer I might have gazed at the weird scene I cannot say. But suddenly the attendants of the Burning Ground, caught a glimpse of my head peeping over the walls, and threateningly they made towards me. I then

recollected that a marble slab over the entrance gate gave public notice that only Hindoos were permitted to enter or to overlook these premises. My Mahommedan driver began to grow anxious, feared a disturbance, supplicated to drive off. As flight appeared the best thing to do, I was soon whirling off at too fast a pace to permit of my being recognised. As I drove round the beautiful bay, the cymballing noise was wafted on the breeze, and on turning round I beheld the white smoke drifting over the green trees beyond the grey walls.

The artistic *dilettante* will find a Bombay cremation but a sorry sight. He will miss funeral pyres such as are seen in up-country villages where the pile fiercely burns in a wild jungly space cleared for the purpose. He will miss the colour flashing on leaves of the deepest hues, the gaping beasts attracted and frightened by the ruddy glow, the picturesque circle of villagers. The Bombay enclosure, close though it be to a lovely bay, will appear but a poor compensation for the grandeur of illimitable woods illuminated by a slowly-rising moon. But perhaps, here as elsewhere, his fancy will be titillated by reminiscences of the grand old Greeks, whose fires burnt at remote ages under the Trojan walls. Classical recollections will flow back to the brain, and even the wretched pyre of the Hindoo pauper, unattended, and uncymballed, will raise grateful memories of the godlike Hellenes.

LETTER XXV.

WALKESHWAR.

TUESDAY, 28TH JUNE, 1883.

BOMBAY.

OF all places in Bombay the tank of Walkeshwar is, I think, the most Oriental. After passing through a banyan grove, after a glimpse of the sea, one descends a stone-paved passage faced on each side by lofty houses and curiously built shanties. On the way down one comes across a Hindoo fane decorated with the Brahminical bull, and perchance full of shaven priests shouting and ringing their bells before some wealthy native paying his puja to the deity. The houses here lie close together for 'tis holy ground, and the devotees of Brahma will pay almost any rent to secure so favourite a place of abode. Yellow and blue coloured walls striped with bands of ochre and red are very picturesque and yield a soft shade. Formerly a great place of

resort for pilgrims from Malabar, one lingers to think by how many legions of men these well-worn steps must have been trod. Alongside the path on its either side boulders of unshapen rock and unhewn stones are touched up with redlead and ornamented with saffron, and the hollow boles of the banyan trees are also adorned with a margent of the brightest vermilion. Lewd images of the Phallus too plainly announce that one is in the neighbourhood of Sivaic worship, and the curious deities stare at one from bricks as ruddy as those of old Babylon. The passers-by malignantly gaze on the occidental intruder in this tabernacle of tabernacles, but against the omnipotent Sahib they dare neither lift a finger nor utter a murmur. They shrink aside and make way with but a bad grace, regretting no doubt this sacrosanct locality is not as prohibited to the white race as their city temples are.

Arrived at the last of the steps a few strides take me to the side of the holy tank into which the waters of the Ganges are, by the superstitious natives, supposed to flow. Numerous flights of steps lead down to the placid and dirty pool, in the centre of which a pole stands upright but rotting. Around this artificial stone basin houses of the most picturesque construction, obelisks as studded with plaster intaglios as those of Egypt, topes looking like monstrous pine apples, flags balancing from lofty trees, attract the attention. Worn and decayed, their sides bare of plaster,

the sacred edifices are nevertheless bright with colour, and they glisten in iridescent reflections on the murky waters of this Bethesda of the Hindoos.

As unmindful of the scowl of a dirty fakir as of his outstretched begging bowl and rosary I stroll over the paved area between the houses and the tank. The picturesque dwellings are full of richly-dressed women, saturnine men, and swarms of children one vast bigoted phalanstery. Long cotton and silken garments placed out to air over the carved balconies make them as gay as if decorated for the Dewalee. Teeming with infant life, resonant with the tinkle of foot bangles, sweet with pearly laughter these residences seem scarcely less bright than the sun which glows upon them. In a courtyard I see a holy cow being dressed in flowery wreaths, adorned with housings of silk, and fed on the most liquid of ghee. Happy creature, it lows as it rubs its placid head down to its red-coloured hoofs and tinkles its bead bracelets. Happy being! held as sacred from persecution out here as the red robin redbreast at home. To kill one of the breed is for a Hindoo to commit a crime scarcely less awful than to slaughter a Brahmin. No doubt in a country where horses are few, and where traffic is carried on by the bullock a religious ordinance of this kind is, to say the least of it, politic. Then yonder I notice Aryan women putting on their richest clothes to go to worship

with quite as much fiddle-faddle and meticulous care as our Englishwomen display when going to church to charm the curate. Even the poorest maid is not devoid of her little vanities, for she has popped purple and yellow flowers in the silken black knot of her hair, and her nose-ring is more than usually large.

If amongst the three hundred millions of deities worshipped by the Hindoo, there be a Goddess of Campanology, here assuredly she has her abode. Never have I heard a more deafening ringing of bells, seen more vivacious bell-ringers. Under the sacred fane the Brahmin toils at his Big Ben more energetically than the peal loving Quasimodo did in Nôtre Dame, and his arms go up and down more quickly than those of the quickest of punkah wallahs. Not satisfied with the sound of the bell, he adds the boom of the gong to the tintinnabulation, and every passing breeze stirs to music the rows of tiny bells in front of his temple. With delirious frenzy in quick time the chimes succeed each other, the campanologists are replaced, and the choral chant and the hymn are followed by the wild ululation to Ram. Prayers are offered during night and day by lungs that seem made of brass, and by windpipes of cast-iron. How any of the inhabitants of this quarter can sleep or earn a moment's repose in such a clatter, passes belief, but the Hindoo has extraordinary aptitudes for falling asleep under the most adverse circumstances.

The inner chamber of these temples, and which is jealously veiled from the public eye, usually contains a representation of the god in brass, many-headed, briarean in hands. Within the outer court the Brazen Bull, odoriferously perfumed with sweet spices, is covered with wreaths of mogree and jasmine. Groups of idolaters step in at the portals with cakes, ghee, and floral offerings of various descriptions. Sometimes one will find the purohita or incumbent chanting a sing-song and cadenced ditty in the centre of a squalling and picturesque masculine group. The narration of the sensual amours of Khrishna are thus recited, enlivened probably by meretricious allusions to Kali and Durga. Uninitiated in the transcendental visions and philosophy of the faith, grossly ignorant, a glutton, a pimp, the priests of these temples are delegated to attract the vulgar, fond of shows and ceremonies, whilst the richer and more intelligent members of the sacerdotal caste, in the solitude of their chambers, are busied with theories that would have astonished even Schopenhauer. Theories as wild, fantastical, and recondite as those of the schoolmen, and well worthy to be relegated to the limbo to which squared circles have been consigned, still occupy the leisure hours of the latitudinarian and learned Brahmin.

That a people should be better than the gods they revere seems, at first sight, a paradox, but is in the case of the Hindoo axiomatically true.

The rigidest moralist amongst them will laugh at Khrishna's tricks, enjoy the tales of his conjugal infelicities, take an obscene delight in his escapades. He will evince no righteous anger at the recapitulation of Durga's fearful crimes; Parvati will set him chuckling by her shrewishness, Gumpu by his gluttony. When taxed with the inconsistency between his own quiet life and that of his gods, he calmly replies that deities are permitted many things which are impossible to be imitated by mankind, and that he must not ruin his business or good name by imitating the divine. So he continues to make his offerings of votive cakes, ghee, and mogree flowers, to deities whose moral code is the very antipodes to his own, with all the obliquity of the Greek, who, after enjoying Aristophanes' sarcasms on Bacchus, would, nevertheless, after the fall of the curtain, straightway go to pray at that god's shrine as fervently as ever. A good father, a faithful husband, modest, industrious, often unpretentious, the Hindoo daily bows the head before a pantheon whose moral characteristics are the very antithesis of those he considers necessary to his own eternal and worldly welfare. Amongst the many inconsistencies of mankind, I know of few more startling than this.

But I am aroused from these reveries by the sight of a holy man, naked, daubed with the ashes and dirt of many a pilgrimage, and now going down to wash his eating vessels in the green-covered tank. Carefully he steps into the sacred

flood, clears out platter and spoon, says a mumbling prayer, and remains absorbed in abstract meditation, waist high in water, a dimpling wavelet around his attenuated thighs. On the rice-covered pool cloud after cloud of pigeons swoop down, and suddenly the placid face of the lake is disturbed by the rings made by their flapping wings, and the touch of their feet. A Brahmin next appears, bathes in the waters shoulder high, salaams thrice to each of the cardinal points of the compass. His ablutions performed, he issues forth like another St. John the Baptist, a disciple hastily performs his slight toilet, dries him, rubs him down, adjusts the sacred thread. The one tuft of hair on the back of the shaven head is tied whilst a prayer is recited, and betel and pan is handed to the Guru, who, with his disciples, slowly reascends the broad flight of steps, shaded underneath a violet silk umbrella. In the small group a handsome youth attracts the attention of two laughing girls, who peep at him from a highly-coloured verandah. But ascetic and as great a mysogonist as any monk of the Middle Ages, he passes them by without so much as lifting his head. He probably has abandoned his parents, his wife, his children, to hear the Vedas read, and to pass his studentship amidst holy men before he enters on his householder's existence, to finally end with the ascetic and religious life that still forms the last two stages of a devout Hindoo's existence.

But in a few moments this group is followed up

by a pampered Maharaj. Plump, obese, sensual, he also comes here for ablutionary purposes. How many women's lips have dwelt upon his, how many rich widows have desired copulation with him in the amorous game of Krishna and the Ras Lila ! By popular credulity imagined to be a living incarnation of the jolly deity his rich devotees know of no pleasanter duty than to dry his feet with their hair, to eat the dust he treads on, to bow before and to worship him. Rich Bhattia merchants set apart a portion of their earnings for his sustenance, they meet in vile games in the temples where he sits enthroned as a god, and whenever he gets imprisoned for forgery or other "trifling" peccadilloes, come to the gaol gates with flowers and fruits for his adornment and refection on the day of his release. Satiated, aldermanic in bulk, this man-god passes by, an eastern incarnation of Friar John of the Funnels.

The most cursory observer could not fail to notice the analogy here presented between the Brahminical priesthood and our own mediæval priesthood. Is not the pale youth so lately seen attendant on the spiritual guide a facsimile of those ardent scholars who gathered around the ambulant preacher or holy friar. The Aryan Brahmins are as much the intellectual heads of the Indian world as the monks and secular clergy were once of the west; conservators of learning, they alone read the sacred books, recite the sacred prayers, and enunciate the law, both civil

and ecclesiastical, of the time of Menu. Their excommunication and minatory threats are still as potent in many parts of this Presidency as those uttered of old by Torquemada, and they still attract bands of zealous disciples as eager as those who followed the disputant Abelard or Duns Scotus. Like the ancient recluse the modern fakir, as far as English authority allows, still tortures himself, and this beggar, with his withered and ankylosed leg, might hold the palm as regards self-martyrdom with Simon Stylites. Here are gigantic parallels to be drawn between a state of religious society still existent here, but which has well-nigh passed out of recollection in Europe, and which await an abler pen than my poor goose-quill. But the most noticeable feature in Brahminism is perhaps that it has no organised clergy, there are no bishops or deacons, no governing body of elders, and everyone ministers at his own sweet will.

That the sacerdotal tyranny of the priestly caste has been dislocated by the advance of western civilization cannot for a moment be disputed. The twice-born Brahmin has fallen so low as to take occupation in the office of the white race, and no native in Bombay clears out of his road like they do in southern India. But that his ascendancy is still sufficiently potent at the normal rate of Indian progress to last at least a century yet is quite apparent. For many, many years more, fed and fattened, the priest and high-caste fakir will

be tended by delicate hands, and regaled with the profuse hospitality with which yonder dark ladies are so reverently pampering this impure being, rutilant of oil and adorned with cow-dung, who sits above them. All the powers of the English courts and the opinions of the press have not influenced very greatly the number of the devotees of the Maharaj. The Gopis will long continue to put up their lascivious prayers, and women will long feast on the ocean of bliss and carnal desire.

The sun will continue for perhaps æons yet to gild these strange topes, and will sink to sleep in red flames for centuries more in this lake. Lovely, large-disked and serene, the moon will sleep on the tranquil waters lined with bathing crowds. The devout will long for the restoration of the Yoni or holy stone, and as rich draperies as ever hung from Spanish balconies to welcome a Cortez or a Columbus, will flaunt from these towers for repeated festivities. Here submissive as a child at the command of the Brahmin, the unruly native chieftain will centuries hence still cringe as humbly as Henry did in the snow before Hildebrand at Canossa.

LETTER XXVI AND LAST.

THE MONSOON.

SATURDAY, JUNE 30, 1883.

A FEW preliminary showers had announced the beginning of the monsoon, but the burst of the rains was strangely delayed. Hot days succeeded hot days, and the Bombay Cassandras commenced to predict it would be a famine year. Happily their prognostications have proved utterly groundless, for a few nights ago, amidst the vividest lightning and the roll of the thunder, the first portion of our annual deluge fell on the grateful and long-expectant earth. In less than six hours acres of sun-cracked wastes were transformed into paludean morasses, and the yellow and parched turf turned to a most beautiful green.

Not a paper comes to table but it brings us news of the terrific work of water and wind. We read of houses blown down in the native town, of trees uprooted, suburbs under water, of boats plying up and down the streets of Surat. Prognostications

of a good rice harvest follow hard on these lugubrious details, and before the mind's eye visions of paddy fields, growing like Jonah's gourd in a night, are constantly evoked. The casing of bungalows torn away by the wind exposes the tricks of the native contractor to our view, and shows us how great is the amount of rotten wood exported from southern India for Bombay house-building.

Both night and day the flood falls from above, turning our gutter pipes into cascades, our streets into rivers, and the tanks into expansive lakes. Locomotion on foot is almost out of question; we live in our houses, scarce dare to stir out except in a closed vehicle, for umbrellas and coats are useless defences against tropical rains. Dismally imprisoned for perhaps three weeks or even more, time passes slowly; but the sudden fall in the temperature reconciles us to damp, mist, and the other multitudinous evils of an Indian monsoon.

Huts, bungalows, and warehouses have long ago been barricaded with matting, which gives them the appearance of having been prepared to resist the bomb shells of an invading host. The beautiful statue of Her Majesty—like all other edifices of marble—has been covered up under stout sheeting of corrugated iron. Thus will it remain till September brings us assurances of a settled sky, and the passing away of the rainy season. The boats in the harbour have all been trimmed with hatches and tarpaulins, like our English

canal barges. Bullock carts have been provided with stout hoods of matting lashed to bamboo, and the hackney cabs are fitted up with leather cloths to completely cover up the inside passenger. Coolies and coolie women have placed straw covers over their open baskets, but the sweet vendors use American waterproof stuffs for this purpose. The coachman of the well-to-do wear the thickest of thick great coats, their turbans are cased in tight-fitting oilcloths, whilst at the offices the hamals have put away their resplendent headgear to adopt peaked caps of red colour, something like those worn by football players. Every policeman is provided with a huge Mother Gamp cotton umbrella, which he handles about in a very formidable manner. He also wears sandals, with very thick soles, and tucks up his blue trousers right over his very black knees as he stands about in the puddles.

The tramways, which, during the fair season are open on every side to the air, are now enclosed in oilcloth hangings, which gives them a very queer appearance. Sunshades, which ornament the horses' heads during sultry May and oppressive June, have disappeared, and the dripping backs of the steeds are partially covered over with waterproof clothing. The conductors are as well wrapped up as if they contemplated a journey to the Antarctic or Arctic Oceans, and their damp and limp state has deprived them of their normal vivacity. The native passenger is also less garrulous than in the fine weather, his white gar-

ments are spotted with mud and his turban is dirty, dripping and dim. Squabbling over fares is, however, as interminable and noisy as on the most beautiful of summer days, and pice form the subject of fierce contestation.

The Parsee lady's strolls by the ocean are things of the past, and now she sits at the windows of her household or in her verandah taking a listless pleasure in watching the draggletailed wayfarers. Towards evening she may probably drive to hear the band play, but it is hard to suppose she can derive much pleasure in sitting in a closed vehicle, completely covered up by oil-skin, and cimmerianly dark. Better far stop at home and take an indolent interest in the dispirited crows swaying disconsolately on the trees, which are shedding little rills and cascades from the cups of the overflowing leaves. Her slight shoes get imbedded in the mud when she walks in the streets, her soaked sarri clings around her figure like a wet sail around a ship's mast, her clean mathabana becomes as dark as her eyes. Oh, better stop at home, pretty Parsee, to nurse the poor peevish children, crying from want of exercise, and to be ready at hand to repair the breaches wind and rain make in every apartment. Meanwhile the Sabeen males go down to the shores to catch cold in useless endeavours to catch a glimpse of the sun, and to put up their prayers under the protection of cotton umbrellas, through which the drip-drop of the showers falls on their saturated mitres.

The poorest natives, by hook or by crook, have managed to get a few yards of coarse cloths they wear like shawls, and as head coverings. Very wonderful are the umbrellas of these poor folk, for all the colours of the rainbow enter into their construction, and their texture is perfectly transparent. Raising his trousers or his loin cloth right up to his thighs, the male straddles about across the sea of puddles, exhibiting his lanky and attenuated legs. His wife and his daughters elevate their garments all about the waist, and cover their heads and backs with empty baskets, and old gunny bags. How they all manage not to die of rheumatism seems inexplicable.

But wretched as is the appearance of one of these drenched natives, it bears no comparison to the miserable state of the cattle. Bullocks with their horns streaming with moisture, the eyes blinded by rain, pursue a devious course over the streets. Horses run down with water as if they had but just had a bathe, and yet steam like furnaces directly they come to a halt to chew the dripping straw brought for their refection from the back of the rumble. A poor dog, almost indistinguishable by mud, may now and again be seen crossing the thoroughfares, and saturated cats leap over rushing gutters to pursue water-logged rats. Everywhere, and all day long, the fierce patter of rain and tornadoes of wind sound in one's ears.

Our menservants are in vain attempting to keep out the damp from our leaking abodes. Trunks

are soldered down, saddles kept constantly oiled, cheeroots placed in glass bottles fitted with lime stoppers to draw the moisture from the fragrant weeds. Ladies' kid gloves are almost hermetically sealed, mildew and rust everywhere make great stains over our knick-knacks. Hamals carrying umbrellas escort our cook in his progress from the native kitchen to the dining-room, and fortunate do we think ourselves if the soup is undiluted by the deluge from Heaven before it reaches the table. The condition of the roof, the strength of the walls are minutely enquired into, and the carpenter finds constant employment in repairing the breaches made in the tiles by the rain. With his old-fashioned, almost antediluvian, tools he drills and he shores up the warping planks, the rotting pilasters, beating their crumbling sides with a not very vigorous stroke of the hammer.

But, notwithstanding the damp, the inroads of rain in our households, the murky sky exchanged for our shadeless atmosphere of the fine season, we feel reconciled to a state of things which has freshened the air. Once again we breathe freely, we know what it is to read with intelligence, to have a dry skin. Oh, happy and blessed monsoon. May I spend the remainder of thee at Benáres!

THE END.

the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are employed in the public sector has increased by 1.5 million, from 2.5 million in 1980 to 4 million in 1995. The public sector has become an important employer of people with mental health problems.

There is a growing awareness of the need to improve the mental health of people in the public sector. The Department of Health (1996) has published a strategy for mental health care, which includes a commitment to improve the mental health of people in the public sector. The strategy states that 'the mental health of people in the public sector is a priority for the Department of Health' and that 'the Department will work to ensure that people in the public sector have access to the same high quality mental health services as the general population'.

The Department of Health has also published a number of guidelines for the management of mental health problems in the public sector. These guidelines are designed to help public sector employers to identify and manage mental health problems in their workforce. The guidelines state that 'public sector employers should have a policy on mental health problems in the workplace' and that 'public sector employers should ensure that people with mental health problems are able to continue to work, where possible, in their own jobs'.

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